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Mortimer

Deacon Skidmore's letters

New York

[pref. 1879]

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DEACON SKIDMORE'S

LETTERS. ³⁰⁸
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Box 141

WRITTEN FOR THE COLUMNS OF
THE TRUTH SEEKER

BY
[D. M. BENNETT]
JOEL SKIDMORE,
First Deacon of the Zion Hill Baptist Church.

NEW YORK:
D. M. BENNETT, LIBERAL PUBLISHER,
141 EIGHTH ST.

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G. J. G.
Linn, Ind.
10-11-23

Oct 20, 1923.
No.

PREFACE.

When it was decided to print Deacon Skidmore's letters in book form, and the matter of a preface, as is customary with nearly all books, was suggested, the Deacon was communicated with upon the subject, and asked if he had any objection to the enterprise and if he wished to say anything by way of preface, when the following note was received from him, which we will take the liberty to insert here, and which will probably answer for a preface:

DEER FRIEND BENNETT: I must say yu almost dashd my modesty when yu rote me yu had konkludid to make my letters into a little book. Yu must well understand that I did not rite thozе letters with suffishent kare to justify thare being made into a volume to be prezervd for jenerashuns, nor did I suppoze thare wood be interest enuf taken in them to justify yure going to the expense ov making a book ov them. But if yu think yu kan sel enuf ov the books to get yure money bak, I don't no az I hav any speshal objekshuns, tho I shoold not think many peepel wood take interest enuf in thozе rambling, gossipy letters ov mine to enduse much sale. I hav only this to say: I hope yure frends wil not think I rote them to be made into a book, or that I think myself a riter. I am only an old farmer, and about the last thing I ever thawt ov doing waz to rite a book.

Yu no what my objekt waz when I first rote yu; I thawt yu waz in error, and that if yu wood giv me

spase in yure kolums that I kood konvinse yu ov it. But tho my jujment haz jenerally ben kalld pretty good, I waz mistaken that time. The rezult waz direktly the opposite ov what I intended. Riting for yure paper ov kourse kauzd me to reed it, and finally to reed sum ov yure books and to think over what I red. In that way I bekum konverted insted ov yu. But I do not regret it. I am feeling very happy in my new beleef, and wood feel fully so if it waz not for the sorro my frends exhibit.

My speling reform wil ov kourse not eskape obzervashun. I am a beleever in that reform. It iz a need that aut to be supplyd. I am aware that my efforts are vary imperfekt and that between your printers and myself a regular stile ov spelling sum words haz not ben pursued. My intenshun haz ben to spel the words, so far az possibel, az they are pronounced. Ov kourse we hav not letters enuf in our alfabet to hav a letter for eech sound and for a perfekt sistem, that wood be nessessary, but my idea iz to do the best we kan with what letterz we hav. Az it iz now, many words are spelt in several different ways, and often very awkwardly and with more letters employd than thare iz any use for. I wood be glad if newspaper men and bookmakers wood spel words az they are pronounced az neer az possibel and drop all useles and silent letters. To do this perfektly sum 15 or 20 new letters shoold be added to our alfabet, but that iz a reform I shall not undertake. My point iz to uze what letters we hav to the best advantaj and drop the superfluous wuns.

Beleev me yure fast frend for life,

JOEL SKIDMORE.

Zion Hil, N. J., May 12, 1879.

DEACON SKIDMORE'S LETTERS.

INTRODUCTORY.—DENUNCIATORY.—CONFIDENTIAL.

ZION HILL, N. J., July 20, 1878.

MR. EDITUR OV THE PAPER KALLD THE TRUTH SEEKER, *Dear Sir*: I hav for 10 days felt imprest with a feeling that it waz my bounden duty to rite yu a letter and to giv yu the truth az it iz in Jezus. I hav seen 2 or 3 of yure Infidl sheets, & I must tell yu I think thay ar simply horribl. John J. Smith, hoo livs about a mile & a haf northeest ov me, takes yure paper and he haz let me se kopiz ov them 3 or 4 timez. He thinks it iz the gratest paper that waz ever printed, but I just think it iz the most blasfemus sheet that waz ever givn man to reed. I don't se how yu dare to go on and tauk the wa yu do. If I shoood ever git so wicked az to tauk & blasfeem the wa yu do in evry paper yu print, I shoood expect that the grate God hoos throne iz abuv the klouds wood send down hiz thunderbolts upon me & strike me to the erth. I shoood expect evry minit wood be my last. It iz a grate wunderment to me how it iz the Supreem Being allowz such a man az you are to cumber the ground. If I kood be God Almitiy about haf an our it iz my opinyun that thare wood be no Truth Seeker nor

Truth Seeker editur left to spred thare darkness over the minds of men & wimmen and turn soles from the tru path of virchu & eternal life.

How kan yu go on and tauk the way yu do? I shoold think yure konshunns wood trubble yu so yu kood not sleep nor eet. Nabor Smith will hav it that yu ar the gratest man that livs. He sez yu hav no feer for God, man, nor the devil, & I dont beleev yu hav neether. If yu had a litl more feer before yure ize, I beleev it wood be a grate deel better for yu. Yu are having yure day now, but let me tel yu that a day of reck-nin is sure to kum, & then yu will hav to anser for all yure unbeleef and all the awful things yu hav sed. I woodn't stand in yure skin then for the best farm in Hunterdon kounty with a good teem of horses and a new farm-wagin throne in. It iz my onest opinyun that yure chansen for hapines in the wurd to kum ar ov the very slimnest karakter that kan possibly be imagind.

It makes my blud farely kurd! to reed yure sassy questyuns to God and yure disbeleef in the Bible, as well az to reed sum ov the letters which yure frends rite yu. Oh, how much yu all need the saving grace ov our Lord Jezus Kriste to save yure benited soles from hel and damnashun. Yu hav preshus soles to be saved or lost, and I wood that yu kum to Jezus before it iz too late and while his arm iz stretched out to save.

Yes, I thant I wood rite yu a good long letter and see if I cannot perswade you to depart from yure evil waze & repent & turn to the Lord. Yu hav too much talent to devote to the servis of the devil. He haz a grate plenty in hiz employ without

you, and I wood be so glad to see yu devoting yure time and abilitys to a better purpus than yu ar pursuing.

My naber Smith—we kall him Kaptin Smith, for he had a kompany in the 9th Jersey rejiment in the war—wil hav it that yu ar wun ov the most onest men that livs; he sez this iz so bekauz yu oppoze the popular relijyuns which hav most all the welth in the kuntry and the stile and influence, and take up on the side of unpopolar opinyuns and advokate them in the fase ov all opposishun, when yu no that the mas of peeple will despize yu for it. I told him I had to admit that it waz a pretty good test ov onesty and sinserity, but still it duz not proov that yure doctrins ar tru. A man may think ever so strong that he iz rite, and be rong after all. Yu may say that rule wil apply to me just az wel az to yu. Mebbe that iz so, but, yu must remember, I hav the Bible on my side, and yu go square against it, and O that makes me feel so bad when I think of it that yu do not aksept that blessed book az the word ov God. Why, it seems to me it wood be ever so much better if yu wood just embrase the truth and kum to Jezus and beleev the Bible. I luv Jezus and that good book so much that I want yu to luv them too.

I want yu to understand that I have a very frendly feeling towards yu, tho yu ar so much in the dark, and, if yu ar willing to print this letter, I wil follo it up with others, and wil do my best to sho yu a better way than yu ar now persuing. Do remember that yu hav a preshus sole to be savd or lost, and, oh, why don't yu try to save it? Do konsider what a terrible thing it iz for a sole to be lost. Yu had a grate deel better hav no sole

at all than to looz it. Now, Mr. Editur, if I kan be ov the leest servis in helping yu to save yoor sole, yu shal most sertinly hav my ade fre gratis for nothing. I beleev yu hav a good big sole, but if yu ar so unfortunate az to looz it, yu wil not be a bit betr off than az tho yu had the smallest, most diminutiv kind ov a sole yu evr herd ov.

Now, Mr. Editur, let me make a bargain with yu. If yu wil print this letr in yure paper, and giv a Kristyan man like myself a chans to be herd in yure colume, I will rite yu a seeriz ov lettrs, doing my best to giv yu the truth and keep yu posted az to how the gospl flurishes in this nek ov the woods. My wife, Sally, sez yu wil not print a Kristyan letrr in yure paper, becauz, from what she herd me reed out ov thoze papers which Kaptn Smith let me hav, she sez yu don't beleev much in Kristyans, and that yu wood rather print Infidl lettrs and peeces. But, sez I, Sally, I am going to try him wuns, any wa, and I hav a notion that he iz a fare man enuf to print a letr if it duz not tauk just az he beelevs. And so, Mr. Editur, heer goze I enkloze a fifty sent scrip for yure paper thre munths. I notis yu sa that yu wil send it too nu beginners thre munths for haf a dollar. That iz good in yu, and az times ar so hard I wil gladly avale myself ov yure good offer. I wil take yure paper, az wicked az it is, that long eny how, and if yu wil print my lettrs, I wil try and send yu wun evry week if my wurk don't prevent, and I hope by that time I wil be able to konvert yu and a good many ov yure heethen reeders, and, if I kan doo that, I shal not begrudj the time and labor. The valu ov a singl sole is enormus, and if I kan

save even wun it wil be glory enuf for me. If after the 3 munths ar up, I like yure paper, and I find thare iz sum hopes of konverting yu and sum ov yur reeders, I wil send yu 3 dollers for a hul yeer, and I shal pra evry da that yu ma bekum konverted to the truth.

I must tel yu I am a farmer. I hav 125 akers of tolerabl good land, and it iz pade for. I don't o a sent on it and no man holds my note for a doller and I hav sum munny on intrest. I don't want to boste but I wil sa I stand midling fare in this komunity. I hav bin deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church for more than 10 yeers, and most evry body within five miles ov this place wil sa that Deeken Skidmore's kredit iz A number 1, and that what he sez iz just about so. I waz born and razed in this kounty and hav always livd in this state. I marrid Sally Krandal 26 yeers ago and we hav livd, thank God, middlin happy together sens. Sally iz naturally a littl spunky and wuns in a while her dander gets stird up and she tawks rathr hasty, but I hav lernd that if I keep still and sa az littl az possibl then she soon kools down and in a littl while iz az kind az a kittn. In that wa we mannej to get along prety wel, I tel yu. I diskuverd menny yeers ago that thare ar menny wurs wimmen than Sally Skidmore. She used to be rite good looking, but hard work, baring children and inkreasing yeers hav taken awa sum ov her good looks, but when I remember all the good deeds she haz dun for me and my children she looks wel to me yet. She haz bin a good muther and nou she haz a mutherly look, and our Elder Goodly kalls her a muther in Israel.

We hav 5 children that hav grone up and too dide when littl; the first wun dide with the meezls and the other had the rikets and had a sweld hed. He waz sik a long time but endured hiz sufrings with grate pashens. 2 ov our grone children ar boys and 3 ar girls. Tha ar all marrid but 1 boy and 1 girl. Our oldest boy marrid Phebe Dusenberry; tha ar farmers and liv 5 miles to the south ov us. Tha ar both pius Kristyans and hav 3 children alredy. Our oldest girl, Sally, marrid Steven Goodrich, a yung man from Monmouth kounty. He keeps a kuntry store in a littl villej, and runs the post-offis. My dauter Sally belongs to the Church but Steven dont. He sez he dont se az church fokes ar enny better than enybody els. He iz a littl in the dark yet. I pra for him wuns in a while. Our sekond boy aint marrid; he haz gon to Kalifornya and Kolorado. He iz in the mines and haz dun pretty wel. I am afrade he iz a littl wild. He haint got no more relijun than a bootjack. Our midl dauter Cyntha marrid 8 months ago to a yung man, Giles Studwell from Filadelfia. He iz klerking in hiz father's dry goods store and haz fare prospekts. Tha hav no children yet, but Cyntha rites her muther that tha hav reezen to expekt wun along by September. Our yungest girl, Suzan, iz at home with us yet, but I'm afrade we shal lose her before very long, for Samuel Kraighed, son of Deeken Kraighed, iz sticking to her mity klose. He kums to se her evry Sunday nite, and tha set up in the parlor til most Mundy morning, and I kan se plane enuf that the gal likes him. If I do say it, Susan iz wun of the finest girls in this kounty. She iz ov middle size, but very trim;

she haz big, brite, brown ise and long brown hare, and Sam sez her mouth iz the prettiest and sweetest ov eny girl's in the hul kuntry, and I think he aut to no. She teeches a klass in the Sunda-skool, but betwixt yu and I the gal aint got eny more relijun than the law allows; she goze to meeting evry Sunda, but she sez she dont beleev eny more ov what Elder Goodly sez than she haz a mind too.

It iz hardly nesessary for me to tel yu I am not a first clas speller. When I waz about 15 yeers old I had a bad spel with the hoopin-coff, and I hav bin a bad speller ever sinse. 15 yeers ago I waz elected skool trustee, and I waz calld upon to rite a notis for town meeting, and sum ov the boys made a good deel ov fun over my produeshun. Tha counted 19 mistakes in spelling in it, but I didn't kare a sent. Tha nu what I ment, and that waz all I kared for; and it iz the same wa now. If yoor readers understand my meening it iz all I want. If I dont spel akording to the prevaling fashun its no matter. I think we need a spellin reform about az much az we do more greenbaks. I beleev in just uzin the letrs that ar neded and no mor.

I hav lots ov things I want too tel yu but must draw too a kloze now. If I find faver in yure ise I shal expekt to get a TRUTH SEEKER in corse ov a week with this lettr in it. If I doo I wil take it for granted that yu ar dispozd too let me rite agin. Sally iz almost afrade too hav THE TRUTH SEEKER cum into the hous and sez she wil bet 3 quarts ov buttermilk that if I reed yure paper 6 months I will be neerer konverted to yure doctrine than yu wil be tu mine. Time wil tel. Suzan sez she wil bet a doller out of her butter munney that Bennet

konverts her daddy to be an Infidel. She wood just as liv I shood bekum an Infidel az not. But, praze the Lord, that I wil never do and it wil never be. My fathe iz too firmly grownded on the rock ov ages ever to be shaken by the storms ov unbeleef. I subskribe myself truly yures, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. II.

THE DEACON IS GRATEFUL.—PIOUS HOLLOW PEOPLE.

ZION HIL, N. J., Aug. 3, 1878.

MR. EDITUR OV THE TRUTH SEEKER: Yure paper haz kum to hand, and I se yu hav printed my leter. Good for yu. I didn't hardly beleev yu wood be magnanimus enuf to print my hard-shel epis, but I must giv yu grate kredit for liberality if yu are lost in the dark on other subjekts. I hav glanst over yure kolums and tho I se infidelity stiking out in almost evry line, sense yu hav ben kind enuf to giv my leter such a good plase, and in such good, fare tipe, I must aknolej that the kurse iz taken off the hul paper to a grate extent. Yu no "a litel leven leveneth the hul lump." So it iz with the grase ov Jezus, and a tru fathe in the saving effikasy ov hiz blud. If a man haz a du share ov theez, we kan put up with a good deel that amounts almost to pure devulment. Now I no thare ar sum fokes in our church that kood hardly be endurd in the sosisety of desent peepul if it waz not for the strong fathe tha konfes in that saving blud. I must oan up to yu rite heer in the start that tha wil li and cheet, tha

wil oppres the wido, the poor and the simpel; tha wil not pa thare onest dets if tha kan keep out ov it any wa in the wurd, and tha wil slander thare nabers; tha wil borro and not return, and all that and more too ar tha gilty ov evry da ov thare livze, but tha do aksept the blessed blud of Jezus which washes awa all sin and unkleennes, and we are taut too beleev tha wil be admitted into the kingdom, and wil ware az brite krouns, and sport az much hevenly juelry az thoz hoo try to akt onest.

O, Mr. Editur, that blud iz the gratest thing that waz ever devizd sense the sun shone; tho wun's sins ar az skarlit, it washes them az white az wool; it konverts a bad man into a sante, and turns into anjels ov purity thoz hoo wood not otherwise be fit for the land, nor the dung-hil. I tel yu thares nuthing like that blud. My deer fello-sinner, let me entreet yu to hav an intrest in that blud. Thare iz a fountin ov it larj enuf to wash the hul wurd if tha wil only step in and be klenzd from thare iniquitys. My dying frend, do step into this fountin and be klenzd from all yure bad deeds, and all yure unbeleef. Izent it kurius how wun being kood furnish so much blud, so that all the wurd kan bathe in it if tha wil? I sumtimes think ov that, and wunder how it kan be possibul, but then I don't allow myself to dout anything about that blud. It iz my only chance for salvashun in the wurd to kum, and I kan never giv it up. The thawt duz sumtimes kum into my mind if that fountin must not after a while get pretty fowl, so many peepul ov all deskripshuns ar washing off in it, and klenzing themselvs from so much impurity, but I don't allow myself to think much in that line. I no it iz my duty to aksept all

the heavenly truths, and beleev in all the misterys ov godlines. I am led to suppoze that thare iz sum plan by which that fountin kan be kept sweet and pure, tho wun mite think if he giv hiz mind up to karnal reezen that in such hot wether az we hav had lately, it mite begin to smel a litel; but that iz wun ov the buffetings ov the devul, and it iz rong to lisen to them.

Speeking about the shortkumings and misdeeds ov sum pius Kristyans, I hav sumthing to tel yu under that hed after a while. We hav in Zion Hil church sum pretty striking examples ov sinning Kristyans, and I woodent wunder if I shood sum-time konsider it my duty to let the lite ov truth shine in a litel upon sum ov thare dark deeds. I kant sa I fellowship with much ov the doings that take plase in this favord kommunity. In the Zion Hil Baptist church we hav 165 members hoo par-take ov the sakrament, and not kounting the litel children ov the beleevers, hoo will in the nachural koarse ov things, the most ov them, bekum members after a while. Out ov thees 165 members, 107 ar females, old and yung, and that leevs only 58 ov the male purswashun. It iz a sumwhat melankolly fakt that menfokes, poetikally kalld "the lords ov kreashun," do not take az naturally to relijun az the wimmen do, and I hav meny times thawt that females kan luv Jezus eezier and hartier than it iz posibul for a man to luv. Tha ar luvin kreetures, enywa, and tha all want sumbody to luv, and Jezus iz a very handy substitute. 2 miles and a haf from Zion Hil, on the Trenton rode, iz Pius Holler, and thare iz a Methodist church, and tha hav got more members than we hav in our church. In all, tha hav, old

and yung, good and bad (and I feer the latter ar the most numerus), 217 members, and ov that number 139 ar wimmin and 78 men. Sumhow the Methodists kan alwaze kount up more members than the Baptists or the Presbyterians. Thare iz a sertin klass ov peepul that take very kindly to Methodism. Thare hollering and shouting seems to draw in the rif-rafa to a remarkabul extent. But while konsiderabul kan be sed for the quantity ov our Methodist nabers, I kant sa much for the quality. I tel yu tha ar a pretty hard set. We hav got sum rathur tuf kases in our church, but I no more'n 20 in the Pius Holler Methodist church that I wood not hav admitted into Zion Hil Baptist church on eny akount whatever. If the questyun ov thare admishun into our fold waz put to a vote by the razing ov the rite hand, I wood raze both ov mine az hi as I kood reech aganste thare admishun. I spose I aut to be charitabul to the folloers ov Jezus, if tha do not purtake ov hiz body and blud at the same tabul I do, but thare ar sum members in ful fellowship in Parson Smiler's church (Parson Smiler iz the minister in the Holler) that I wood almost be ashamed to be seen taunking to on the hiwa; I don't want to sa much now about the members ov Pius Holler church, but probably ma hav more to sa after a while. In passing, however, I wil tel yu that wun ov thare members haz bin to state prizen for making a mistake and putting another man's name to a note for 75 dollers; wun haz ben tride in our kounty kourt for a 2 yeer old heffer and 11 sheep being kept 6 weeks in hiz pastyur that belongd to othur men, and the kase went agenst him, but hiz lawyur took an apeel, and it iz now pending in the hier

kourt, whare evrybody thinks he wil be beet. Sum say it wil kost him over 1,000 dollers. Wun man was sude for slandering Miss Kimbul, and had to pa 50 dollers and kosta. 13 hav ben sude for det, and jujments ar hanging over 9 ov them now; 2 had a regular nok down fite about 250 old rales; and Brother Braddon giv Brother Green a sound pummelling, and tha wer brawt up before the church, and Parson Smiler gave them a regular lekchur. 3 hav bin akused ov steeling, but had no trial. 6 ov the prominent members ov that church doo not pa thare hierd men az tha agreed to, and hav had a good deel ov fussing about it. Thare iz a mity site ov kwareling in that church, among both the men and wimmin, and the female porshun ov the kongregashun do beet all kreashun for bak-biting and gossiping. Tha not only tawk in a most ungodly manner about thare own members, but tha giv our Zion Hil fokes down the banks too, at a terribul rate.

I mite keep on in this wa for three ours, tawking about the shortkumings ov the Pius Holler fokes, but I don't think it iz quite rite, and so I refrane; but I must menshun wun pekuliarity, and that iz, having babys without going thru the marrij seremony. Why, in the last ten yeers I hav kounted in Pius Holler church twenty-three babys that hav ben born and it waz not nown for sartin hoo thare fathers wer—tho sum peepul thawt tha kood ges pretty klose. I hope I ain't betraing much konfidense when I tel yu that thare ministers hav bin akused ov being fathers ov 7. Parson Smiler iz filling hiz third yeer in the holler, and the old wimmen do sa for sartin that he iz the father ov Nansy Hawkins' child, and Minny Sprage's, and Kitty Foster's.

These girls thawt a grate deel ov thare deer minister, and when tha felt az tho the trubuls ov life bore hevily upon them, tha went to Parson Smiler for konsolashun, and it iz thawt tha got it. He iz a kind-harted man, espeshally to the yung sisters; he speeks to them very mild, and tha do sa he haz a wunderful sweet smile. The parson that waz at the Holler before Mr. Smiler, waz Bruther Luvwel, and he waz thare thre yeers, also. Thare ar fore litel toheds running about in the naberhood that bare a striking rezemblanse to Parson Luvwel, and the noing wuns sa he shurely iz the father. 2 ov the mothers wer girls and 2 wer yungish widders. Bruther Luvwel waz extremely popular with the wimmin fokes, and tha hated to hav him leev, but the men, espeshally thoze that wer marrid and had grone dawters, thawt it waz very wel that hiz time waz up. He iz now sude to be doing a very lively biznis in Midelsex kounty. I hope, for the good name ov the kauz ov tru relijun, that he wil try and keep the baser pashuns a litel in chek. I find that ministers, with all thare advantajes and holy instruksbuns, ar only men, after all, and that wher tha hav not the spirit ov God in them tha ar just az eezily led astra az eny body else.

I wil just remark to yu—but I don't kare about yure putting it in yure paper—that I hav sumtimes had my douts about the Methodists being ov the tru seed ov Izrel. Tha seem to hav such a strong inklinashun to follo after the lusts ov the flesh that it haz sumtimes been hard to aksept them az jenuine Kristyans, and it duz go agenst the grane a litel to kall them brothers in Kriste. But when I remember that tha hav washt in that same fountin of Jezus'

blud, and that tha ar bound for the happy land ov Kanan, just az much az the Baptists, I hav to giv in and own them az brothers and sisters in the gospil. Tha insist that thare church iz just az good and respektabl az ourz, but I kan't think so; and thare faults' ar so plane to be seen that I kan't help men-shuning them wunse in a while. I hope yu wil not think strange ov it. I wil pra God to make them better and more perfekt.

I ges I hav sed about enuf for this time, and wil not detane yu longer; but I must just observ that my dawter Suzan haz just kum into the room. She haz ben looking over yure paper, and sez she likes it beter than she ekspekted. Sum things, she sez, seem a litel harsh and irreverenshul, but she likes yure boldnes and kurrij. She sez she did not no there wer so meny kontradiکشuns in the good old Bible az yu sho thare ar. I hav not red that part yet, but wil before I rite yu agen. Suzan sez, "Pa, I wish, in yure letters to THE TRUTH SEEKER, yu wood spel like uthur fokes, and not be so od." I tel her I am od eny wa, and spel the stratest, the handiest, and most nacheral wa, and that I am going to be a reformer—a Fonetik Reformer! Next to my blesed relijun, I shal make the speling reform my hobby. Suzan blames me sum for telsing yu about Sam Kragehed's liking her and thinking her lips ar so sweet; she sez that iz nobody's biznes but hers and Sam's. She sez I ma giv her luv to yu, for she likes yu sum alreddy. I tell yu, frend Benet, that gal iz a trump. Her hed iz level, and yu ma be proud that she thinks wel ov yu at the start. My wife, Sally, haz gone to Monmouth kounty to visit

our oldest dawter, and wil be home in a fu daze. Yu will heer from me agen in du time.

Yure prareful frend, JOEL SKIDMORE.
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. III.

WRESTLING, CAPT. SMITH, AND SUSAN'S COURAGE.

ZION HIL, August 12, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I set myself down to rite yu my third letter, with a hart ful ov trubul and anxiety. Thare iz so much Infidelity in yure papers that it almost makes my hare stand on end to reed them. Sum times I almost feel that I hav made a mistake in entering into a kontrakt to reed yure paper for thre munths, and to rite yu a letter evry week. But I am not the kind ov man to put my hands to the plow, then look bak. I made the bargin in good fathe, and and I shal stik to it if it kills me. But I must asssure yu that I hav had a grate rastling time with myself. I hav prade urnestly for lite from on hi to gide me in the path ov my duty. I hav got up 2 ours before da, and wauked the flore til dalite, and then I hav nelt and prade the best wa I new how that I mite not do anything to bring kondemnashun on myself or do the cause ov tru relijun any harm.

I hav grate fathe in prare. Whenever I am in trubul, or if I am at a los to no my duty, I never fale to kry out to my God that he will gide me arite in all things. Our Savyur sed, "Ask and ye shall reseev; nok and it shal be opened unto yu;" and I

hav not a dout ov the truth ov that promis. So I hav prade and prade that yure paper need not darken me so as to put out the lite ov the gospel in my sole. I find a good many things in yure paper that stagger me a little. I must sa sum ov it sounds very rezunabul, and I hardly no how to anser sum ov the arguments I find thare. I must admit I did not no there wer so many knotradikshuns in the Bible az yure paper points out. I must sa, too, that Mr. Frothingham and Mr. Underwood, and sum ov the other riters, tauk in a very sensible wa. When I waz reeding them peeses over I thawt to myself, "Now, I don't beleev that Elder Goodly wood tauk much better than that himself."

Yes, yu hav sum good things in yure paper, but thare ar sum that seem awful wiked to me. Thare ar the letters from the devil; tha are terribul. True enuf, the old fello tauks pretty wel, and sez sum very sensibul things, but then he's the devil after all, and he haz no biznes to rite for a paper that desent peepel rite for. It shoks my pius senses when I think ov it, that Deeken Skidmore and the devil ar riting for the same paper! Hoo wood hav thawt it? But Suzan haz releevd my feelings to a grate extent about the devil. She haz ben reeding over hiz letters, and she sez she don't beleev it iz the same devil that trubbled Job with so many boils and afterwards waz the same old fello that karried our Savvur threw the air and shode him all the kingdums ov the erth from a high mountin, and wun ov the same that got into Mary Magdalen and gave her so much trubbul, to sa nothing ov the 2 thousand hogs that got the devil into them and rushed down into the se and drowned themselves. I hav more than wunse thawt

that my hogs wood not be such big fools if thare wer ever so many devils about.

Yes, Suzan stiks to it that it ain't that old devil at all. She sez yure devil iz a gentlemanly sort ov fello and haz a pretty good edukashun and noze what he iz tauking about. She sez she kan lern a good deel from yure devil, and it's her opinyun if he duz kall himself "Splitfoot," that if eny body kood se hiz foot, it ain't split at all. She just thinks that it iz sum person riting thozе letters and putting the devil's name to them. Suzan iz most alwaze rite, and I haf think she iz in this. I hope she iz, for I don't kwite want to be in the same kanoo with the devil, and riting for the same paper. I don't want to be on kwite so familiyur terms with him az that. Wun thing I hav notised: there iz no smel ov brimstone about hiz letters. I hav put my noze klose to them, and smelt hard, and koodn't smel the leest mite ov sulfur. That, with what Suzan sed, releevd my mind, for I am shure if thozе letters wer really from the devil, they wood hav the smel ov brimstone on them.

Oh, I must tel yu: Kaptin Smith waz over heer yesterda afternoon, and we had a long tauk. He is ever so glad bekauz I am taking THE TRUTH SEEKER and am riting for it. He sez it's the best thing I ever did. He sez he noze wel enuf that yure reeders wil be plezed with my letters just az much if I don't beleev az tha wood if I did. He laft and ha ha'd out loud and shook hiz sides good. He sed when he saw my name in yure paper, and that I waz going to take it and rite steddly for it, he felt az good az tho he had found a 50-dollar bil. He sez if he had a milyun dollers he wood giv evry sent, and begin the

wuld anu, if evry family in the kuntry kood take THE TRUTH SEEKER and reed it. He iz a good frend ov yures, and sez yu ar doing more good than all the preechers put together. He sez hiz hird man, James King, reeds yure paper and likes it ever so much, and the Kaptin sez Jim iz so glad that Deeken Skidmore iz a subskriber and rites for it that he iz willing to giv a munth's work for nothing. The Kaptin sez the paper wil make anuther man ov me; that when I hav red it a fu munths I wil gro, and that my mind will expand; that I will thro awa sum ov the narro vuze I hav held to, and that I will think and feel different.

With all hiz unbeleef, Kaptin Smith iz a very fine man. He haz ben living in this naberhood about 15 years, and I hav herd ov no meen akt he haz dun. He haz no fathe in our relijun, and he don't giv any thing to pa the preechers; but he paze hiz dets like an onest man, and hiz word iz az good az hiz note. If Kaptin Smith shood tell me he wood pa me 100 dollers on Kristmas da, I wood feel just az wel az tho the munny waz in the bank. I think so much ov the Kaptin that, so far az I am konserned, I wood be perfektly willing to take him into our church if he wood aksept a fu ov our vuze or subskribe to a fu ov our artikles ov beleef. If he wood only pretend to beleev, it wood be enuf for me, for I no he iz a better man to-da than haf ov the members ov our church, not eksepting Elder Goodly himself. The Kaptin wood be an oner to eny church or eny kommunity. But he sez he will never join eny church or eny sosiety that klames to hav a reveeled relijun or found thare beleef on supernacheralism. He don't beleev in eny thing supernacheral, and haz not for

20 years. It most makes me shudder sumtimes to heer the Kaptin tauk about what he kalls the old fables and what ridikulus nonsense the churches kling to. If he want such a fine man I shoodn't kare to be frendly with him or to hav him visit my family; but hiz kondukt iz all rite, and I am proud ov hiz akwaintanse and frendship.

Kaptin Smith iz not a rich man, but he iz wel off. He ones 99 akers ov fare land, 15 ov which iz in timber, and don't o a doller to any man for it. He don't beleev in morgajes nor poor fenses. He duz beleev in deep plowing and a good kote ov manure. He sez he had ruther hav 30 lodes ov manure to the aker than all the prares and pius blessings that kood be piled on to it. Yu se, he iz a regular Infidel, and that iz all enybody kan sa agenst him. But he haz good krops, razes good kattel, sheep, and hogs; he livz peesably with hiz nabers; he duz az he agrees, and lets others attend to prare and praze. If a man kan get to heven that wa, it ma be all wel enuf; but I hav my douts.

My wife kum home 2 or 3 daze ago, and Suzan and I wer glad to se her. Muther found Sally and Steven in good helth and doing midling wel, tho Steven komplanes that trade iz very dul. He sez the farmers ar bying kaliko and sundres with grate kaushun; but krops ar kuming in pritty wel, and evrybody expekts better times in the fall and winter. I mite az wel tel yu that our dawter Sally haz bekum a muther. She haz a litel sun wun week old, and tha wil kall him Joel, after hiz grand-daddy. That waz the cheef rezun why my wife went over thare. Thus, yu se, I hav another grandchild. Sally and the baby ar doing fiae, and the daddy iz probably wun ov

the happiest fellos alive. I kan remember very wel how proud I felt wunse on a similar okkashun; but after a while the novelty wore off. So Steven will find it.

Wife haz given me a pretty good lekture sinse her return. She sez she beleevs I hav about gone krazy to bring an Infidel paper into the hous, and to bekum a regular kontributor to it. She sez that iz a pritty wa for the 1st deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church to akt. She ekspekts nothing else but what the church, Elder Goodly inkluded, wil be down on me for heresy. She beleevs I wil be kalled up before the church for my kondukt, and, if I am not turnd out ov church, I wil be disgrast and my offis taken awa from me. "Do yu think," sez she, "that Zion Hil Church wil sit stil kwietly and let its 2d offiser run off and join the Infidels and help run thare paper? I tel yu what it iz, Joel Skidmore, yu hav made a grate mistake. Yu had better lose the best 3-yeer-old heffer in the wood-lot. I shan't feel az tho I kan hold up my hed among fokes, and when we go to church I shal feel like waring a hevry vale, so that the Elder's wife and Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Dubbleda kannot reed my name. Anything else than being an Infidel's wife or an Infidel frend's wife, or the wife ov a man who rites for an Infidel paper!" She taukt sumthing about divorce, but I kept still and let her go on, and when she got threw she stopt without my saing a hard wurd. Whot I did sa I wil repeat to yu and yure readers, and I don't kare hoo noze it. I sed I had dun nothing rong, nuthing but what I had a perfekt rite to do, and whot, perhaps, mite result in grate good to yu and yure readers, and that I did not kare what the

members ov the church had to sa about it; I didn't ask them when to li down, when to get up, when to eet, nor when to abstane from eeting, and neethur shoed I ask them what paper I shoed reed and whethur I shoed rite a letter or not. I sed, in adishun, that I did not o wun ov them a sent, nor was wun ov them under any necessity ov going to hel for cnything I mite do. I told wife that I had kounted the kost, that I nu what I waz about, and that I shoed be master ov my own kondukt. Sally sed she had no dout but what I wood, that I had alwaze shone that dispozishun, and she ekspektet I wood kontinner on to the end ov the chapter.

Suzan herd part ov her muther's lekture, and she thawt the old lady waz a little to hard on me, and she stood up for me like a majur. She sed I waz rite, and all I had to do waz to go ahead. She hoped I wood not mind what Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Dubbleda mite sa. Sed she, "Fathur, yu hav made up yure mind to take THE TRUTH SEEKER for three munths eny way, and yu karry it threw, and I wil stik to yu, tho Sam Kragehed himself goze bak on me. I saw him looking at a kopy ov it last Sunday nite; he red it in 5 or 10 minits, and he sed, 'What kind ov a paper iz this eny wa'? I sed it waz a paper that beleevet in saing just what it thawt; that it waz a pritty good paper, and that I liked it and intended to reed it. Sam sed it waz a kurius paper to be in a deeken's family, and that he didn't beleev hiz fathur wood hav it eny kwiker than a rattlesnake. I sed, Look heer, Sam Kragehed, that paper don't kost yu nor yur fathur a red sent, and neethur ov yu are obleejed to reed a wurd in it. It sutes my fathur and me to take it and reed it, and

we intend to take it just az long az we wish to, and thoze hoo don't like it ma do the othur thing. Sam kin' o' koold down at that and sed he ment no offense, and that he had nothing agenst the paper and didn't want to hurt enybody's feelings. Then I sed, I ges nobody's feelings ar hurt, and at that Sam put hiz arm around me and kinder skwezed me til I sed, That's enuf, Sam."

Ah, Mr. Editur, that gal haz got bakbone enuf fur 2 gals, and her mind iz perfektly kleeer. When she takes a pozishun, I no it iz about rite, and I am not afrade to stand by her. So yu ma keep on sending yure paper, and Suzan and I wil reed it eny wa. But let me ask yu to temper down yure Infidelity a little. Kant yu draw it a little mild? Respektfully yures,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. IV.

ELDER GOODLY'S GREAT SERMON.

ZION HIL, N. J., Aug. 20, 1878.

DEER MR. EDITUR: I must rite yu this time about the grate surmun which Elder Goodly delivered to us on Sundy the 19th inst. I kant sa that the Elder iz grate on all okkashuns, or that evry effort he makes iz worthy ov being spoken ov in a komplimentary manner. If we get wun good surmun in a month we ar willing to swallo the thre komonplase affares that he givs us on the other Sundys, and try to feel, to, that the Elder pritty neerly urns

the 800 dollers we pa him for hiz exhaustiv labers for twelv munths. We do not pa him enything like what yure sity klerjymen get, and he toils the hole yeer round with no thre munths vakashun during the hot wether. I hav often thawt that I wood not like to be wun ov a kongregashun to pa a kulcherd klerjyman 5,000 dollers a yeer to brake the bred ov life to us for 12 munths, and then to hav him awa wun forth ov the time without eny dedukshun being made in hiz salery. When I imploy a hired man to work on my farm for a yeer at 18 dollers a month, I no I shood very strongly objekt to having him awa threw June, July, and August, and to hav to pa him, to, for skilarking and perambulating over the kuntry fishing, and hunting, and going in swimming. And I must konfes that I kant se why a preacher aint just az much obligated to work 12 munths for a yeer az he hoo kuts kord-wood, moze ha, and digs potatoze. The rule seems to prevale nowadaze that the more a man gets the les he duz, and I'm afrade our preechers ar very willing to follo it. Thoze that get 5,000, 10,000, or 20,000 dollers a yeer take the longest vakashuns, meny ov them taking plezure trips to Urope with thare pa going on just the same az tho tha wer at home working to save soles.

It duz seem to me that sum ov our gratest or hiest prised preechers do not kare so much about saving soles from the flames ov hel az tha do about getting big salerys, having fashunabul kongregashuns, living in fine houzes, moving in uper sirkuls, taking thare plezent vacashuns, and all that. I am reely afrade that the sheperds ov Kriste ar not just what tha aut to be. I do not beleev thare master ever akted in the wa that thousands ov hir pre-

tended folloers now do, and I kan't think it iz rite. I hav my feers that relijun iz getting to much an af-fare ov fashun.

But I am wandring from my subjekt. I must return to tel yu about our Elder Goodly's surmun. It waz indeed very striking, and made us feel our dependanse upon the goodnes and mersy ov God and to stand in feer ov hiz power. I kood tel by the expreshun ov the Elder's kountenanse on Sundy morning that we wer to hav a diskorse ov unusyal solemnity; he lookt so grave and solum and az tho the welbeing ov the hul world waz resting on him. The him he gave out waz more than usyally impresiv. Wun verse reeds this wa :

"Adore and tremble, for oår God
Iz a konsuming fire;
Hiz jelus ire with rath inflame,
And raze hiz venjense hier,
Almity venjense, how it burnz!
How brite hiz fury gl. ze!
Vast magazeens ov plagas and storms
Li trezurd for hiz foze."

The Elder's opening prare waz ov grate solemnity. He beseeched God to kontinu hiz mersy a litel longer, and not strike us all to the erth. He sed he nu our sins wer so blak that we dezervd to be thrust into hel without a moment's dela; that we had sind awa our da and kalling, and that if ful justis waz dun us, we woud now be rithing in the torments ov hel and damnashun. But he begd God in hiz everlasting goodnes and luv to spare us yet a litel while and giv us won more chanse to repent and kum to Jezus, and he told God that thoz who did not giv up thare evil waze and gathur into the fold

ov Zion dezervd to burn in that everlasting fire and torment prepard for the devil and hiz anjels before the foundashun ov the world.

I tel yu, Mr. Editur, such a prare iz kalkulated to mak a man feel very meen and insignifikant.

I kan't forget the Elder's text. It waz from the thurtieth chaptur ov Izaah, the last haf ov which chaptur he red to us in the most solum voise. For hiz text he took the 27th and the 30th verses, which red az folloze: "*Behold, the name ov the Lord cometh from afar, burning with hiz angur, and the burden tharof iz hevy; hiz lips ar ful ov indignashun, and hiz tung az a devouring fire. And the Lord shal kauz hiz glorius voise to be herd, and shal sho the liting down ov hiz arm, and the indignashun ov hiz angur, and with the flame ov a devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and halestones.*"

When the Elder had sed the text over for the thurd time in the most impresiv manner, he struck out with theze wurd: "My dying frends, the Lord iz amung us, and he haz kum in hiz rath and feerse angur. Let us bow our heds in feer and with trembling that he ma not in hiz fry venjense strike us to the erth. He haz ov late vizited meny plases in our kuntry, and haz shone konklusively that hiz angur haz not bekum extinkt. Among the plases that he haz pade speshul attenshun to iz Walingford in the State ov Konneticut, whare dwelt meny mechaniks and labering peepul. Az hunderds ov theze wer returning from thare daze toil, on the evening ov the 9th ov this munth, God's angur waz pored on them at a feerful rate. Hiz thunders and hiz litenings, hiz rane, hiz hale, and hiz furius winds did beet upon them az skarsely ever man witnest before. Men

and wimmen wer dasht to the erth, and more than a skore and a haf ov them wer kild outrite, or so badly injurd that tha kannot long survive. Over 40 houzes wer demolisht kwiker than yu kood kount 10, and among the rest waz a church—but by the by it waz a Katholik church—and that makes it kleer to my mind that God haz very litel respekt for the Katholiks, not rekognizing them az his tru children. Sum familys ov from 4 to 8 persons wer all swept awa like chaf before the wind, and a vast amount ov property waz hully destroid.

"This surkumstanse, my frends, proves to my mind that God stil retanes hiz old karakter ov jenuine rath and fury. Thare ar sum week-need Kristyans who tawk about God being a God ov luv, and kumpashun, and mersy, and long-suffering, and kindness, but let me tel yu, mi heerers, that he iz a God ov venjens, and rath, and anger, and fury. He iz the same God now that he waz in daze ov old when hiz peeples, the children ov Izrel, used to vex him and trubul him so az to make him angry and furious with feerse rath.

"If yu wil reed yure Bible yu wil se that it waz no unkommon thing in thoze daze for him to sla 50 and 70 thousand ov hiz peeples on a singul okkashun, and for no grate offense eether. And on wun da he aloud 500 thousand ov hiz own children to be slane. Thare kan be no grater mistake made than to suppose that he iz never angry, never rathful, and never vindiktiv and kruel. The oppozit iz the truth.

"If, my fello sinners, yu wil look over the pages ov God's grate book yu wil perseev by hiz own akkount that he abounds in the teribul and furius. Did not Jeremiah in hiz addres to Jehovah sa, 'Thou hast

kuvured us with angur, and persekuted us; thou hast slane, thou hast not pited?" Did not the profit Nahum sa, 'God iz jelus, and the Lord revenjeth, and iz furius; the Lord wil take venjens on hiz adversarys, and he rezerveth rath for hiz enemys. The Lord hath hiz wa in the whurlwind and in the storm, and the klouds ar the dust ov hiz feet. The mountins kwake at him, and the hils melt, and the erth iz burnt at hiz prezense, ya, the wurd and all that dwel tharein. Hoo kan stand before hiz indignashun, and hoo kan abide in the feersness ov hiz angur? hiz fury iz pored out like fire, and the roks ar thrown down by him?' Threw hiz favurit profit Izaah he agen sed, 'The Lord shall go forth az a mity man; he shal stir up jelusy like a man ov war; he shal kry, ya, rore; he shal prevale agenst hiz enemys. . . . Now wil I kry like a travailing woman; I wil destroy and devour at wunse. I wil make waste mountins and hils, and dry up all thare erbs; and I wil make the rivers ilands, and I wil dry up the pools.'

"By Ezekel, anuthur favurit profit he sed, 'Thus shal mine angur be akomplished and I will kauz my fury to rest upon them; tha shal no that I the Lord hav spoken it in my zeel, when I hav akomplished my fury in them.' By the mouth ov Mozes, az rekordd in Duteronomy xxxii, 39 and 42, the God of Izrel sed, 'I kil and I make alive; I woond, and I heel, neether iz thare eny that kan deliver out ov my hand. I whet my glittering sord and my hand take hold on jujment, I wil render venjens to mine enemys, and wil reward them that hate me. I wil make mine arroze drunk with blud, and my sord shal devour flesh.' Agen he sez in the same

chapter, 'Tha hav moved me to jelusy, tha hav provoked me to angur, and I wil move them to jelusy; I wil provoke them to angur, for a fire iz kindled in mine angur, and shal burn unto the loest hel and shal konsume the erth with her inkrees, and set on fire the foundashuns ov the mountins. I wil heep mischeefs upon them, I wil spend my arroze upon them. Tha shal be burnt with hunger and devoured with burning heet and with bitter destrukshun; I wil also send the teeth ov beests upon them with the poizen ov the serpents ov the dust. The sord without and the terror within shal destroy both the yung man and the virjin, the sukling also, with the man ov gra harze.'

"By the mouth ov the wize man Solomon, did he not sa, 'I wil laf at yure kalamity; I wil mok when yure feer kumeth. When yure feer kumeth az desolashun, and yure destrukshun kumeth az a whirlwind; when distress and angwish kumeth upon yu—then shal tha kall upon me, but I wil not anser; tha shal seek me erly, but tha shal not find me?'

"By hiz profit Jerymire he sed, 'I myself wil fite agenst yu with an outstrecht hand, and with a strong arm, even in angur, and in fury, and in grate rath. And I wil smite the inhabitants ov the city, both man and beest; tha shal di ov a grate pestilence.' And again, 'Behold, I frame evil agenst yu and devise a devise agenst yu.' 'I wil make thare land desolate and a perpetual hissing; every wun that passeth thereby shal be astonisht, and wag hiz hed. I wil skatter them as with an eest wind before an enemy.'

"Thus, my heerers, I mite kontinu to reed assej after passej to yu, during the entire morn-

ing, to sho yu that the tru karakter ov the God ov Izrel iz wun ov rath and angur and fury. He ma sumtimes be luvig and kind, but kwite az much ov the time iz he feerse and furius. To hiz venjens there iz no end. So long az men ar wiked and sinful, so long wil God be angry with them every da, az he haz sed. O my peeple! when wil men seese to make the Lord angry and lern not to vex and aggravate him da after da? But if tha wil kontinu to angur him, so long must tha kontinu to take the konsekwenses in storms, in whirlwinds and tornadus; in pestilens, diseze, and deth.

"Thare ar men who wil tel yu that all theze ar prodused by nacheral kauses, but let me ashure yu, my frends, that tha ar the work ov the hand ov God. He duz it, and nobody else, and it iz no power but him. He kauzes evry spel ov siknes which men hav, and he takes evry life that iz ended. No wun kan be born into the world without hiz help, and no wun kan get out ov the world unles he takes them out. God duz evrything that takes plase. It iz he that sends the kolera, the yelo fevur, the plague and pestilens. It iz he that sends the famin, the deth, and the faleyr ov krops.

"He duz all this, my frends, bekauz he iz angry, and it iz men that make him angry, and men ar to blame for all the evil that happens. If men wil be proud, if tha wil forget God, if they wil not beleev hiz wurd, if tha wil be Infidels, if tha wil make lïte ov sakred things, if tha wil not heed the vois ov the holy shepperds that proklame on the walls ov Zion, and if tha withhold thare support from the fatheful shepperds, then yu must expekt storms and tempests and the most feerse destrukshun in all

forms. Then ma yu expekt kolera, yello fevur, smal-pox, fevur and agu, and evry form ov sicknes and pe tilene. God wil be feerd, and he wil hav men to no that he iz the God that rules the erth. I hav no dout, my frends, that it iz the grate unbeleef and disobejens ov the peepul that makes God so angry this year. The Infidels ar the kauz ov it all. If all unbeleef and sin kood be wiped awa then God wood be mersiful and kind; then he wood sho hiz anger no more in storms and syklones. My frends, yu must lern to feer God, even if yu kannot fully luv him. He wil be feerd, he wil be obade."

Thus the good Elder kontinude hiz grate surmun for an our and a haf, but az my letter iz to long now, I must giv yu no more. I must sa, however, that it made a powerful impresshun upon the minds ov thoze prezent, and evrybody waz afrade that we mite hav a hurrikane visit us and kil us and blo down our houzes. I pra not.

Kaptin Smith waz at our church and herd the grate surmun. He kalled over to see us in the evening, and I askt him what he thawt ov it, and he shokt me when he sed he konsidered it very week and rong to charge such things upon a kind and mersiful fathur. He sed he did not beleev he kood ever luv such a God as the Elder had piktured out. Suzan joined in and sed thoze wer just her sentiments. She simply thawt such a God wood be dredful and unluvabul. "For my part," sed she, "I wood much sooner prefer 'Old Splitfoot,' who rites for THE TRUTH SEEKER, than a God who kood get into such a furius pashun and kil and destroy at such a feerful rate; I kood not luv such a God if he sent me to hel a milyun yeers for it." Her muther

skolded her and told her she aut to be ashamed, and a deeken's dawter, to, to tawk so blasfemusly. "That," sez her muther, "kums from reeding THE TRUTH SEEKER." I tride to thro oil on the trubbled waters, and sed that thare waz a grate mistery in godliness.

Deer frend, I bid yu good by til next time,

JOEL SKIDMORE.

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. V.

VISIT OF COUSIN SILAS.

ZION HIL, Sept. 2, 1878.

MR. EDITOR: Last week we had a vizit from my kuzzin Silas, hoo livs in the south part ov the State; he kum with hiz wife and 3 children and stade 6 days. It kept wife and I so bizzy all last week to do the viziting, riding out and gitting sumthing good to eet, that I didn't find time to write yu my regular weekly letter which I promist yu. I hope yu wil konsider the situashun and exkuse me for the omishun. I want to keep all my promises and fulfil all my kontrakts, but when so much viziting haz to be dun a du allowanse must be made.

We hav had a rite good vizit with kuzzin Silas and kuzzin Molly. We wer glad when we herd 10 days ago that tha wer kumming, but we kan sa now that when the time kum for them to go we wer not partikularly sorry. Tha ar 10 yeers yunger than wife and I, and thare children are not grone yet, and tha wer a littel the ruffest set I have seen in menny a da. It wood hav ben a good deel plezenter

for us if tha had left thare children at home, but tha thawt so much about kumming to unkul Joel and ant Sally's that I suppoze that it wood neerly hav broke thare harts if tha kood not hav kum; besides kuzzin had nobody to leev the children with save hiz nabers, and he did not want to ask them to be trubled with hiz wild boys. The yungest iz a gurl, and she tha wood hav brawt any wa; but the 2 boys did enjoy thare vizit here hujely; tha wer on the go from morning to nite, in evry room in the hous, from the garit to the seller, all over the barn, karrij-hous, the stabuls, the hen-roost, the smoke-hous, and evry place tha kood stik thare nozes into. Wun ov them slipt off the ha-mow wun da and it mite hav broke hiz nek had he not fel on a pile ov ote chaf that by good luk happened to be lying on the barn flore. He limpt around pretty bad for haf a da, but he waz soon over it, kliming, chasing, and kutting-up az bad az ever. Wun da tha went a fishing, and that waz kwite a releef for several ours, but when tha kum bak we lurnt that the oldest wun had kum neer drowning, and had not a man been neer by probably he wood never hav kum bak alive. Wife sez she wood rathur have 6 grone peepul around than thoze 2 boys. Suzan liked them and thawt tha ware kut out for smart men, but she sed tha wer to rude for anything in the world. She sez kuzzin Molly haz not a bit ov kontrole over thoze boys, and tha ar vary littel better than az tho tha had grone up with the injuns, and if tha wer painted with red led she thinks tha wood hav made furst-klas Modöks.

Kuzzin Silas iz a relijus man, that iz to sa, he belongs to the Presbyterian Church, and so duz hiz

wife; but I hav my douts whether tha hav the relijun ov the hart, which iz the only kind suffishunt to save thare soles. It seems to be a matter ov form with them. If tha slide along smoothly throo life and pas muster with thare nabers and frends, the church and all hoo no them, it iz about all tha kare for. Kuzzin Silas iz a good sort ov man, but I dout not he wood be just about az good if he did not belong to eny church. In tauking with him about hiz relijus observansez I found out he duz not follo saing grase before meels, nor iz hiz family prare eny thing that he attaches much importanse to. He sed when he had kumpany that were pins he askt a blessing at table and red a chapter in the Bible, morning and evening, and held family prares. He sed he and Molly did not think that praing amounted to vary much eksept to keep up appearances before kumpany. He sed, to, that "wun yeer we folode praing vary stedly from January to Desember, not letting a da pas without 1 or 2 prares; but that yeer we had more losses and trubbul than any other yeer sinse we wer marrid. I lost my best horse and the 3-year-old bul that took the first prize at our kounty fare, and a man who ode me 500 dollers for stok he had bawt ov me for 3 yeers took the bankrupt law, and I never got a sent. Yes, that yeer I prade the hardest and lost the most, and I just told Molly we wood drop the praing eksept on state okasions and see what the effect wood be. Wel, the next yeer we had no bad luk at all. I had three nise horse kolts born to me that yeer, 4 kalvs, 21 lams, and 27 pigs, and not wun ov them dide. Evrything prosperd with me, and I kollekted an old det ov fifty dollers that I had given up and ekspekt-

ed never to get. Altogether, that year that I didn't pra much we made 500 dollers ahead, while the year before, in which I prade so much, we went 1,000 dollers behind. Now, unkle Joel, I don't pretend to sa that it was praing or not praing that made all this differense, but theze ar the fakts; the year I didn't pra much of eny we did wel, and the year I prade evry da I kame neer loozing haf I waz wurth."

I must konfes, Mr. Editur, that kuzzin Silas' statement took me by surprize, and I didn't no hardly what to sa. For 25 years I hav ben a strong beleever in prare. Inkluding asking the blessing at the tabel, I hav prade 5 times evry da besides our regular prare-meeting. Whenever trubbles hav borne me down, and I hav felt az tho the powers ov darkness were ganing the viktory over me, I hav gone to my God, and my Jezus, and opened my hart to them, and told them all about my trials and afflikt-shuns, and meny a time I thawt I felt the better fur it, and I thawt my kries had been hurd. It iz tru that meny times I kood not feel that I had made much impreshun on the throne of grase, and I wondered if God waz not attending to sum other urgent bizness, and waz not listning to what I had to sa. I thawt it possibul that he was awa and I kood not be ekspekted to hav attenshun til he returned. I hav had all sorts ov noshuns on the subjekt, and hav sumtimes doutd if it really did do much good to ask God so often to do this and that for us, and to change hiz plans in this direkshun and that akkording to our rekwest.

It haz seemed kurius to me, when I hav thawt it over, how God kood be ekspekted to rule the world with eny degre ov konsistensy if he haz to lisen to all the rekwests and advise that ar kontinually being

offered up to him and urged upon hiz attenshun. It haz seemed to me that he kood not hav a steddly mind nor parsu a uniform korse of kondukt if he iz under eny kind ov nessesity ov being influensed by what thouzands ov persons ar saing to him evry da, and almost evry our. But we ar enjoind by our ministers and by the Bible to pra without seasing, and I shal most likely keep it up til I am konvinced that it iz ov no use. Tru, I kan't put my finger on a single instanse where I remember that my prares, or eny other person's I am akkwanted with, hav prodused eny marked result, or hav chanjd the ordinary kourse ov things. Yet, altho it ma be an open kwestshun whether prare amounts to anything or not, I wil keep on praing about az I hav dun. I ges it iz safer to pra to much than to littel. If it duz God eny good to hav my opinyun on matters and things in and about Zion Hil, he iz purfektly welkum to the same.

I must tel yu, Mr. Editur, about our vizit to the Methodist kamp meeting held within 15 miles ov my plase, in Goodrich's grove. Kuzzin Silas and wife and me and my wife took an erly start on Fridy morning for the kamp meeting, which had been in operashun a week. Suzan sed she wood sta at home and se to the 2 boys, and hav a late supper reddy for us upon our return; besides, she sed, she had no fathe in kamp meetings, enyhow. She had ben to 3, and she had seen wurse behavuyr thare than eny other plase she ever vizited, and such hollering and yelling az tha indulged in wer friteful to lisen to.

We started a little after dabrake, and my 5-year-old bays took us over in fine stile in 2 ours and a haf. When we arrivd we found the kamp in a state

ov aktivty. The brekfast things wer being put awa. The hundreds ov tents wer all in a bussel; skores ov yung ladys wer dekt out in thare best, and the yung men wer watching them with furtiv glances, which wer returnd in the most jenyal manner by the gurls. The men had gathered together in littel nots, and wer tawking about anything else than the work ov Jezus. I herd sum konversing about how thare krops had kum in, and others az to the prospekts ov the Greenbak party. Kuzzin Silas and I made up our minds that thare waz not more than 1 in 10 ov thozе that attended that kamp meeting hoo went thare out ov pure luv ov relijun and to promote the kauz ov Jezus. The grater porshun ov them kum out ov kuriosity—sum to se the gurls, sum to se the boys, sum to se how thare nabers akted and whot kind ov kondukt waz exhibited thare.

We estimated that thare wer from 3 to 5 thousand humans on the ground. Tho thare waz a fare porshun ov the blowers and strikers, the most ov the assemblage wer yungish peepul who wer not aktu-ated by the most pius insentives in the world. Kuzzin Silas and I, az wel az our wives, made up our minds that thare waz more kourting and sparking to the skware aker on that kamp ground than eny other plase in Nu Jerzy. Kuzzin Silas made the remark, with a sly wink ov hiz left i, that he had notist that, az a rule, about 9 munths after kamp meetings thare waz a sensibul inkrease ov the populashun, and that it waz more ezy to point out the muthers than the fathers. Rite here let me sa that from meny yeers' experiense I am led to sa that the Methodists ar grater on the populashun kwestshun

than eny others ov the folloers ov Jezus. If it iz dezirabul to fil up a nu kuntry with a rizing jenerashun, it woud be the best wa to send in a plenty ov Methodists, and be shure and hold kamp meetings evry summer and a good long protrakted meeting or revival in the winter. The loud kind ov relijun whare the exsitement runs very hi seems very favorabul to the influx ov babys.

At 9 o'clock the big kamp horn waz sounded, which let the boys and gurls and all hands no that meeting-time had kum. We wer informd that thare wer 15 preechers on the ground, and 1 ov them waz a preziding elder. 4 stands or platforms had ben erekted, so yu se the gospel kood be dispenst at 4 different plases at wun and the same time. On the morning of our vizit the preziding elder, Lumis, led off in the furst surmon and we thawt we woud listen to him awhile. He kommensed with a very vigorous prare, kalling upon God to kum down, to tuch the harts ov sinners, and prepare thare soles for the entranse ov Jezus. He beseeched God not to stand aloof or be indifferent when the eternal welfare ov the soles ov dying sinners waz at stake. After this most fervid prare, the elder pitched up this him:

"Alas! and did my Savvur bleed,
And did my Suvrin di,
Did he devote that presbus hed
For such a worm as I?"

All hands jined in, and the singing w. v ry strong. I have not herd anything in our church ekwal to it. After that, another inspiring him waz sung in the same exalted strane, and then the elder went on with a loud surmon, kalling all sinners to repentance, and a share in the blud of Jezus.

He depikted the awful situation of soles that wood be without Jezus when the last da kum, and the sheep were to be separated from the gotes. At that august moment he sed an interest in Jezus waz ov more wurth than all the bonanzas, and all the gold mines, and all the petroleum wels, and all the bank stok, and ralerode shares in the world. "Yes," shouted the elder, "wun drop of the blud ov Jezus in that awful moment iz wurth more than a milyun worlde with 10 milyuns ov nashunal banks added to the inventory." "O," sed he, "in that grate da the Vanderbilts, the Stuarts, the Astors, and the Tom Skots wil kry out for the roks and the mountins to fal on them and hide them from the rath of God. With all thare riches they wood be poor indeed. O sinners kum to the blesed Jezus now; kum this vary our. Defer it not another moment; eskape the torments of hel, and seek refuge in the arms ov Jezus, and in the boozum of Abraham. My dying frends, hav yu the leest idea whot the torments ov hel ar? Let me tel yu: it iz the intense fire ov God's eternal anger which burns in a super-heeted flame ten thousand times hotter than the hottest furnase you ever saw sinse yu wer born, and it surjes and rajes with ever inkreasing heat and fury throout the never-ending ajes ov eternity. The fires ov hel ar so intense that if wun drop ov its fire shood fall on a globe like this, with its vast roks and mountins, it wood melt it in a moment."

"We no how far it iz to the middul ov the erth; it iz just 4 thousand miles; so if hel iz in the middul ov the erth, it iz 4 thousand miles to the horribul prizen ov hel. Down in this plase iz a terrifik noize. Lisen to the tremendus, the horribul uprore of mil-

yuns and milyuns and milyuns ov tormented krechurs, mad with the fury ov hel! O! the skreems ov fear, the gronings ov horror, the yels ov raje, the kryes ov pane, the shouts ov agony, the shreeks ov despare, from milyuns on milyuns! Thare yu heer them roring like lions, hising like serpents, howling like dogs, and waling like dragons. Thare yu heer the nashing ov teeth, and the feerful blasfemys ov the devuls. Abuv all, yu heer the roring ov the thunders ov God's anger, which shakes hel to its foundashuns. But thare iz another sound. Thare iz in hel a sound like that ov meny waters. It iz az if all the rivers and oshuns ov the world wer poring themselves with a grate splash down on the floor ov hel. Iz it, then, really the sound ov waters? It iz. Ar the rivers and oshuns ov the erth poring themselves into hel? No. Whot iz it, then? It iz the sound ov oshuns ov teers running down from countless milyuns ov ize. Tha kry forever and ever. Tha kry bekause the sulfurus smoke torments their ize. Tha kry bekause tha ar in darkness. They kry bekause tha hav lost the butiful heven. Tha kry bekause the sharp fier burns them. The roof iz red-hot; the walls ar red-hot; the flore iz like a thik sheet ov red-hot iern. Se! on the middel ov that red-hot iern flore stands a gurl. She looks about 16 yeers ov aje. She haz neether shoos nor stokings on her feet. The dore ov this room haz never ben opend sinse she first set her feet on this red-hot flore. Now she sees the dore opening. She rushes forward. She haz gone down upon her nees upon the red-hot flore. Listen! she speaks. She sez: 'I hav ben standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for yeers. Da and nite my only stand-

ing plase haz ben this red-hot flore. Sleep never kame on me for a moment, that I mite forget this horribul burning flore. Look at my burnt and bleed-ing feet. Let me go off this burning flore for wun moment—only for a short moment. O that in this endless eternity ov yeers I mite forget the pane only for wun singul moment!" The devil ansers her kwestshun. 'Do yu ask for a moment—for one moment to forget your pain? No; not for wun singul moment during the never-ending eternity ov yeers shal yu ever leev this red-hot flore.'

After preeching in this strane for more than an our, he pitched up the folloing him which waz sung in the spirit of holy unction:

"O the agony ov hel's horrid panes!

Its clatter ov iron, and its klank ov chanes:

The klank ov lashing whips, shril shrieks, and grones,

Loud ceesles howlings, kries, and peersing mones.

Meenwhile, sz if but lite wer all thoze panes,

Lejons ov devils bound themselves in chanes;

Tormented and to: mentors ore them shake

Thongs and forkd iern in the burning lake,

Belching eternal flames, and reethed with spikes

Ov kurling surpents rounze the brimstone fiers,

With whips ov fiery skorptions skurge thoze slaves,

And in thare fases dash the livid waves."

Yu shoood hav seen how warm the elder waxed when he piktured the never-ending fires ov hel, and whot an awful thing it waz to be kalled to di without having ben tuched with the finger ov Jezus and washed in hiz blud. Then the elder shouted at the top of hiz voice, "Kum to Jezus; kum this our; kum this minit; dela not; put not off the glorius opportunity ov sekuring in the blessed and butiful manshuns ov heven, a seet and a krown ov glory to

posses thro the endless yeers ov eternity. Kum, my frends; Jezus iz reeching out hiz hands to resevee yu; he kalls yu; he beseeches yu to kum to him and be krownd with life everlasting. O, if yu kood se the luv that beams in hiz i, and the wishful smile that plaz around hiz sweet mouth, and witnez the affekshunate anxiety that illumins hiz kountenance az he bekons yu to fle from the rode to deth and kum to hiz luvng arms. He holds out the blessing ov immortal life to yu all. He urges yu to aksept the heavenly krown he haz prepared for yu, and wishes yu to take from hiz hands. O kum; O kum; kum now, kum this blessed moment; kum while the da ov mersy iz extended to yu; O Jezus luvs yu, and he wants to save yure soles from hel; he wil do it if yu wil only permit him to do so; kum, ye airs ov darkness and deth; kum to the fountin ov salva-shun; wash and be klenzed from the stanes ov sin and wikedness; put off yure old garments ov filthy rags, and klotho yurselves in the robes of heavenly luv; throw awa yure poverty, and bekum the airs to the manshuns in the skys, where happiness and glory shal be yure eternal reward. O kum, sinners; why wil yu di? why wil yu be draged down to the rejuns ov never-ending darkness and deth? why wil yu stil refuze the welth ov God's eternal glory for the sake ov what the devil haz to offer yu which iz only endles suffering, torment, and pane?

"O, heer the luvly sun ov God kalling yu with teers streeming down hiz fase. He luvs yu more than tung kan tel. Hiz sole goze out to yu and he wants yu to be happy; he wants yu to eskape the hot sulfurus lake prepared by hiz father for the devil and hiz angels—wiked men and wimmen hoo

will not beleev in the effikasy ov hiz blesed blud and aksept the eternal riches and glory which he iz redly to shower down upon thoze hoo wil only reseev. He haz kum down from hiz hevenly abode ov blis on purpus to tender to yu the glories ov hiz selestshul kingdum. He asks yu if yu will not allow him to lead yu to hiz happy manshuns and establish yu az kings and rulers in the empire ov hiz luv. O, do kum to him now; let him not plede with yu in vane. Kum, kum to the best frend yu hav in the wide universe, kum without another moment's dela! Yu no not how soon yu ma be kalld to go hense! Yu no not but the next moment ma be yure last, and if yu hav not before that feerful event takes plase made yure peese with God and aksepted the luv ov hiz blessed sun yu wil be turned into hel with the devil, the snakes, and the gotes, thare to rithe and mone and grate yure teeth in agony and horror for ever. O deer frends, for the luv ov Jezus, the lam ov God, be wize in time. Eskape the damdashun ov God and kum to the arms ov hiz sun.

"O kum, kum, kum. Just own hiz power and konfes hiz name; it iz all yu hav to do. Kum rite forward now to the seet ov mersy and yure eternal torment wil be avoided and yure everlasting happines sekured. Agane, I say kum, kum to Jezus."

Thus the elder went on for neer 2 hours and several ov the other preachers jined in and entreeted sinners to kum rite up to Jezus, hoo waz standing thare to reseev them. Evry wunse in a while tha wood sing a perswasiv song that waz kalkulated to arouz the feers and inspire the hopes ov thoze with not very strong minds. It waz kurius to watch the

effekt it had upon the wimmen and the gurls. Az thare natshure waz appeeled to tha wood overflo with luv to thare deer Jezus and wood rush forward like fritened fawns and throw themselves into hiz imajinary arms. Sum 20 yung wimmen and old mades, were thus neeling and sobbing at the anxious seet at wun time and sum ov them found Jezus vary kwik. And then yu aut to se them bounse and jump and holler. Sum wood role on the ground. Sum wood bound like a rubber ball, and thro thare arms into the air; sum wood whirl and danse and sum wood shout and holler az tho tha had not a bit ov sense left. At wun time in the afternoon thare waz fully 20 akting in this ridikulus manner.

This waz much the way it went on at the other platforms. Eech had a mourner's seet and eech made all the efforts tha kood, and eech had one or more kandidates under konvikshun and reeching for the arms that wer stretched out to save them. When tha felt the dart ov eternal life penetrate thare soles tha wood jump and shout with exseeding grate joy, and thus the kampf rezembled an insane asylum. We saw but 2 men that seemed to hav any feers ov hel or eny speshal dezire to sekure a seet in paradise. It iz evidently eezier for the female perswashun to luv Jezus than for the more korse and stubborn part ov humanity. The preachers skart and perswaded neer fifty yung gurls and old gurls to go forward, and but 2 men wer all we saw go up, and one ov them waz sed to be a good deel belo par in a mental point ov vu.

So it went on neerly all da. We stade till the shades ov evening began to approche, when I har-

nessed up my jolly bays and in 2 ours we wer home. Suzan had a splendid supper all redy for us, and she sed she fully beleaved she had spent her time much more sensibly than we had. And in view of the wildnes and krazy exsitement that ruled the kamp, I thawt she az uzual waz about rite. Kuzzin Silas sed he wood not wish to go to another kamp-meeting for 10 years. Molly sed she wood make it 15, and my Sally sed she wood make it for during life.

In klozing, let me whisper in yure left eer, Mr. Editur, that I think thare iz a more sensibul wa ov getting to Jezus than by a Methodist kamp-meeting. I wood just about az soon go to a Freethinker's konvenshun az yu did. I remane yure pius frend,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. V.

OPPRESSION FOR OPINION'S SAKE.

ZION HIL, N. J., Sept. 9, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I am sorry to se by yure last 2 papers that yu hav ben getting into trubble up at Watkins while attending yure big konvenshun thare. I red yure deskripshun ov the kuntry and its natcheral kuriositys with a good deel ov plezure. It seemd to me that yu shode a spirit ov frendliness and fareness that shood hav ben appreshiated by the peepel ov that town, and that unless yu did perform sum overt akt tha shood not hav ben guilty ov diskurtesy to yu and the others hoo assembled in thare

villeg to hold yure annual meeting, patronizing thare hotels and bording-houzes.

While I think yu ar a man hoo haz denide the only fathe which iz kapabul ov saving a wurld ov sinners, and that yu ar lost in the dark wilds ov unbeleef and karnal reezon, I kan't help thinking that yu ar onest in yure opinyuns and that yu aktually beleev what yu rite. I am sorry yure mind iz so darkened, and that yu ar so far lost from the blessed Jezus hoo alone haz the power to save yure sole from eternal torments prepar'd for thoez hoo wil not luv God and giv him thare hole hart; but I pra for yu evry da, and I entreet God to bring yu, forsbly, if nesessary, to the nolej ov him and hiz son; and yu no I hav fathe in prare.

But all this, Mr. Editur, haz nothing to do with yu and thoez 3 others being treeted in a spirit ov intoleranse and unfareness by thoez hoo profess to hav the grase ov God in thare harts, and to skware thare lives by the teechnings ov the meek and lowly Jezus, hoo felt kindly to evrybody (exsept on a vary fu okkashuns), and I am sorry to se that my brethren in Kriste shood so far stra from the path ov richusnes az to want to oppres and annoy eny wun hoo differs from them in matters ov fathe and opinyun. I waz glad to se yu did not sa anything about the Baptists being engaged with the Presbyterians and the Episcopalyans, at Watkins, in thare attaks upon yu; for while I am fre to admit that tho I hav menny times none men and wimmen hoo belongd to my denominashun that wer guilty ov meen akts which tha never shood hav kommitted, I am parshul to my church, and am alwaze glad when tha keep out ov bad kompany and meen kondukt. Az I think tha

ar a little neerer the truth than any other Kristyans, I also think tha aut to sho thare superiority by performing more good akts, and fewer bad wuns.

I aksept yure statement that yu had nun ov thoz books kalled "Kupid's Yokes" at Watkins, and that if yu sold eny it waz to hand wun up when sumbody kalled for it and when the yung lady hoo had them for sale waz awa, and that reely the book haz no bad wurds in it, and iz not obseen, and also that yu had no sort ov share in the profits from the sales that wer made. I believ enuf in yu to think yu tel the truth about this biznes, and from that vu I must sa I think yu reseevd vary unkind treetment and that thoz pius fokes wood hav dun much better to hav let yu depart in pees than to attempt to konvik and imprizon yu on so slite a provokashun. I hav no idea that the juj's bruther or the juj himself or eny wun hoo red the book haz ben depraved, vishiated, or debauched by reeding the littel book. If the juj and hiz bruther kan reed it without injury, why kannot almost any other purson? It iz kurius how much more afrade sum peepel ar about others being injurd by indesent publikashuns than themselves. I don't suppoze wun ov that Grand Jury wood own that tha had ben hurt by reeding "Kupid's Yokes," but tha wer so afrade that sum other purson wood be hurt by it that tha think yu aut to be sent to prizon for a number ov yeers bekauz yu kasually handed a kopy ov it to the juj's bruther hoo asked yu for it. Such iz human natchure the world over.

Yu aut to heer my Suzan tawk about yure arrest. Yu no I hav told yu before that she iz a gurl ov the klcerest vuze ov any gurl in this kounty. I don't

remember az I hav ever none her to be far out ov the way in her jujment and opinyun. She sez it iz a perfekt shame that the old editor of THE TRUTH SEEKER shoold be arrested on so trivial a charge, and she don't belev that Kristyans hoo kood be gilty ov such kondukt ar eny better than heethen, if az good az sum ov them ar. She sez it makes her most mad to see peepel hoo pretend to hav found more grase than other fokes, to be meek and lowly folloers ov Jezus, and speshul favorits with God and the Holy Gost, and then to turn round and be gilty ov all sorts ov meen triks and subterfujes to get thare fello beings hoo cannot think just az tha do into trubble and to shut them up in prizzon and take awa thare munny and other property. She gits so exsited on the subjct that I think she tawks pritty near az harsh about professing Kristyans az yu do. She sez from what she haz red and what she has seen she has kum to the konklushun that Kristyans or Church fokes kan be just as meen, krueel, tyranikal, and intolerant az eny peepel in the wurld, and she noze thare ar no more kwarelsum and mischef-making peepel under the sun. She haz red history a good deel and she sez tha hav dun more fiting, more killing and slaying, more hanging and burning for opinyun's sake, than eny other kind ov relijunists in the hole wurld. I don't no but Suzan iz about rite, but I hate to own up to her that church fokes ar az bad az tha ar.

She sez it iz a shame and an outraj for a man ov yure aj, and hoo trize so hard to teech peepel the truth az yu do, to be throne into disgrace and expense, with a prospekt ov being deprived ov yure liberty, on such a pitiful pretense. She sez that juj must hav a grate deel to do to send hiz brother to

by the pamphlet ov yu for the sake ov entrapping yu, and then to instrukt the Grand Jury that tha must find the book to be obseen bekauz he had red it and pronounst it so. She thinks he overstept the bounds ov hiz duty when he told them what desizhun tha must kum to. In this opinyun she haz support from a lawyer hoo belongs to our church and livs in our naberhood. Hiz name iz Greenfeeld. He duz not praktis very much now, az he iz getting along into yeers, but he haz ben a very prominent man in this kounty. He haz ben sent 3 times to the lejislachur ov the State, and waz wun ov the most influenshal members thare. He haz ben a kandydate for juj, and kame within 27 votes ov being elekted. Wel, he sez that Juj Hurd transended hiz duty when he pronounst upon the natcher ov the pamflet and told the Grand Jury what konklushun tha must kum to, and he thareby shode a parshality, or prejudis, that inkapasitates him to sit az juj on yure trial. He sez the offis ov juj iz a very important wun, but it iz very eezy for him to be over-zelus and go to far in hiz likes and dislikes. He thinks that iz just whare Juj Hurd haz mist it.

We feel a grate kuriosity to see "Kupid's Yokes." Pleez, for the enklozd, send me 3 kopies. Mr. Greenfeeld wants wun, Kaptin Smith wants wun, and I want wun. We all want to see what it iz that the juj ov Skyler kounty haz made so much fuss about. I presume a grate proporshun ov yure readers wil feel the same wa. Kaptin Smith waz over here last nite, and he waz a good deel eksited over yure arrest. Yu no I hav told yu before that he waz a warm frend ov yurz, and he espozes yure kauz with a grate deel ov earnestnes. He sez yure ene-

mys ar trying to krush yu and brake up yure bizines; but he iz konfident tha wil fale, and, that indest ov putting yu down, yu wil rize higher in the estimashun ov the Liberal peepul ov the kuntry. He told me to rite yu not to be down-hearted, but keep up good kurrij, az yu hav dun heretofore. He told me to tel yu he would send yu 10 dollers before yure trial kums off to help defra the expenses, and, if nessessary, he wil raze 50 dollers for yu. He sed, the last thing before he went awa, "I take a good deel ov stok in Bennett, and I am going to stand by him to the last." You aut to hav seen Suzan britten up at that. She sed, "Good for yu, Kaptin Smith. I oner yu for thozе brave wurdс. I am with yu hart and hand. I beleev that man iz fitting an unekwal battle with the forses ov preest-kraft, bigotry, and superstishun, and I am proud ov every wun hoo, like yu, iz not afrade to sustane him. I wish I had a 100 dollers. I would send him haf ov it to help him in hiz br^oue work, and to help him in hiz defense against the allied powers ov Church and State."

When my dawter had made that littel speech wife sed to her: I think, Suzan, you have sed kwrite enuf. It seems to me yu ar getting to be a pritty warm frend ov that old Infidel Bennett. I wunder what yu kan se in his wiked, blasfemus paper that yu think so much ov. For my part, I had rather reed that old TRUTH SEEKER a week. I don't se what my dawter sees in it to admire, for to me it iz abominabul. I do hope the family of Deeken Skidmore iz not all going to turn infidel. Suzan iz about az good az that now, and I reely beleev the Deeken himself

iz about wun kwarter konverted; but I tel yu what it iz, hiz wife wil never forsake the tru kolors ov the Prinse ov Zion. I am going to follo him in this wurd and rane with him in the next. Yu ma all follo Bennett but I will follo Jezus."

At that Suzan sed: "Mother, I meen to follo after the truth wharever I kan find it. I am bound to no man nor no speshal mediator. Wharever I kan find the truth thare is whare I will follo and it makes not a bit of differense to me whether it iz uttered by Jezus, Konfusius, or Pythagoras, I aksept it, az freely from wun az the other when I am konvinced ov its reality. So long az I think Bennett gives us the truth, so long wil I kontinue to respekt him; and it iz just az onerable in him to be pursekuted for opinyun's sake az eny others ov the past teechers ov the wurd."

Mr. Editur, yu ma think me a littel shaky, but stil I stand firm on the rok ov Zion; but I kan't help thinking Suzan iz kwite az neer rite az the old woman. I subskribe myself yure frend,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hill Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. VII.

INTOLERANCE AMONG CHRISTIANS.

ZION HILL, N. J., Sept. 16, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: The first thing I want to tel yu iz that thoze kopys ov "Kupid's Yokes" I sent for kum safe to hand, and we hav had a grate time in reeding it. I kood not se much in it, good or

bad; at eny rate, not bad enuf to send a man to prizen for riting or selling. I am satisfide that thare iz a grate deel ov retchednes in the wurd groing out ov unhappy marrijes, and the wurst kind ov bel I hav yet met with haz arizen from a man and woman being forst to liv together hoo perfectly abhord each other. I have none them to kwarrel and fite til evrything lookt fairly blu around them and evrybody's life neer them waz made retched. That being the kase, it wood seem that almost eny suggestion that kan be made, looking to an improovment in this state of things, iz in order; and if a man makes sum rekomendashuns that wife and I don't beleev in, it don't follo that the man aut to be sent to prizen like a felon for it. Wife sez it served him rite, and she hopes to heer that yu hav gon to prizen to. She thinks thoze Watkins Kristyans no what tha ar about, and while tha pretend it iz "Kupid's Yokes" tha ar after, it iz Freethinkers tha wish to katch, espeshally that wiked old fello, Bennett, hoo aut to be strung up to the first sour-apple-tre that iz met with. She insists that eny wun hoo trys to brake down the only good relijun the wurd haz got, and trys to set up a rule ov reezon in its plase, aut to be driven out ov the wurd without serymony or dela. If such men ar alowd to go on tauking up thare heresy and unbeleef, in a short time thare wil be no tru fathe in the wurd, and the blessed blud ov Jezus wil hav lost all effekt in saving the soles ov men. She sez the Presbyterian preecher, Mr. Waldo, and Juj Hurd ar rite in persekuting yu the wa tha do, and she hopes tha wil send yu to prizen whether yu sold "Kupid's Yokes" or not.

Wife iz a little intemperate in her remarks, and I tel her she haz zeel without nolej; that wunse it mite hav dun very wel to hang and burn and behed peepel for opinyun's sake and for not aknolejng the truth ov the gospel ov Jezus; but that it waz geting to far along in the aj ov the wurd for such kind ov biznes to be popular eny longer. I even took the opurtunity to sa to her that to much ov that kind ov amuzement waz karrid on a fu hundred yeerz ago for the kredit ov the Kristyan relijun. I konfest to her that it waz the most damajng blot upon the fare fase ov our blessed fathe that it had ben the direkt kauz ov sending hundreds ov thousands and milyuns ov peepel to krue and untimely deths, just bekauz tha kood not beleev az sumbody wanted them to. I aknolej d to her that, with all my fathe in and admirashun for the kauz ov Kriste, I kood not beleev that murdering, killing, and imprizning peepel for opinyun's sake waz rite. She anserd by kalling me haf wa an Infidel, and sed that by the time I had red the old TRUTH SEEKER a fu more munths I wood be kleen gon over the dam. I told her to rale awa, and that I hoped I had grase enuf to stand all she waz abel to sa. So wife and I go on time after time. She iz vary zelus in defending her relijun, and she hopes yu wil be sent to prizen. I try to defend reezon and kommon sense, and insist that yu hav dun nothing to be sent to prizen for. Suzan alwaze takes up on my side, and agenst her muther, when she iz prezent, and she even goze further than I do. The wa she denounces the bigots at Watkins wood do yu good kood yu heer her. She sez if tha do send yu to prizen for that littel affare that she wil hav her name taken off the

church roll-book, and she wil sware that she never waz a Kristyan.

Lawyer Greenfeeld haz kalled on me twice within the past week. I se he iz vary much interested in yure arrest and the kondukt, espeshally, ov Juj Hurd. He reeds yure paper vary karefully, and he sed to me to-da that if it iz tru that Juj Hurd had used hiz pozishun to korse the Grand Jury kontrary to thare own konvikshuns, and had allowed klergy-men to go also before them to ade him in indusing them to akseed to hiz wishes, that he entirely overstepped the bounds ov propriety and had laid himself open to impeechment, and that if sum prominent sitizen wood move properly that he be impeeched, thare wood be no trubbul in akkompliching it. He sed, moreover, that the inditement agenst yu, in vu ov the Juj's remarkabul kondukt, iz not wurth a sent, and that it kannot stand for a moment after it iz lookt into by enny abel mind. It iz interesting to heer him denounce the wrong kondukt ov that Skyler kounty juj, and he sez that such a korse iz kalkulated to bring more disgrase upon the kourts ov the kuntry and upon the kauze ov justise than ennything he haz hurd ov for a long time. He thinks, to, that if that juj imagins that he iz by that line ov kondukt going to promote the kauze ov sektarianizm, to which he seems to be so much attacht, he never made a grater mistake in hiz life. The result must be to bring odium not only upon the meens employd to akkomplich hiz wish, but also upon the bigoted influense that he seemd so willing to serve. He sez if he waz in praktis he wood like no eezier task than to defeet that juj and his efforts.

Kaptin Smith tawked much in the same'wa when he kalled heer last nite. He has got so now he kums over to se us evry Sundry nite, and az he kums before Suzan's bo, Sam, kums, it sutes very wel, for Suzan thinks a grate deel ov the Kaptin, and likes to heer him tawk. He waz partikularly sever last nite on that preacher Waldo, hoo seemd so offishus in the hole proseedings, first in kauzing yure arrest, and in the next plase in sekuring yure inditment, and sees in it the same intolerant, persekuting spirit which aktuuated the Kristyun church for 15 hundred yeers, which has draged milyuns ov unfortunate beings to prizen, konfined them in noysum and dizmal dunjens, subjekted them to torture on the rak, the wheel, the pullys, and hundreds ov other invenshuns ov kruelty which the ingenuity ov man haz ben taxt to devize and konstrukt; which haz made them to pas munths and yeers in the deepest mizery and pane; which haz draged milyuns to the stake, thare to be roasted in hot fires and slow fires, while thare life past out ov them in the most intense suffring and agony, and all at the instanse and kommand ov such men az Waldo, hoo hav pretended to be karrying out the wil ov the meek and lowly wun hoo, when upon erth, sed he had not whare to la hiz hed. Theze persekuting Kristyans hav ben the terror ov the wurd, and hav kauzd more unhappiness than all other ajensies and kurses that hav inflikted mankind. He regards that man Waldo az a fare reprezentativ ov thozе murderus retches that hav hung, beheded, and burnt thare unfortunate fello beings for wel on to 2 thousand yeers. He sez Waldo wood hav made a first-klas Torquemada, Philip the Sekond, Duke of Alva, John Kalvin, or

Kotton Mather, and if he kood only hav had such bakkers and rulers az Juj Hurd haz shone himself so willing to bekum, he wood hav ben in hiz glory, and wood hav made hiz unfortunate bruthers and sisters in humanity grone in sorro and terror. It iz such men az he that hav kast the utmost odium upon the name ov Kristyanity and made it a byword among men and a stench in the nostrils ov just and good soles. If Waldo had the power which hiz bigotry kovets, the Kaptin feels shure that the stake, the beheding-blok, and the varius torturing invenshuns wood stil be in use even in our own kuntry, and, in all probability, yu and yure 3 fello-sufferers wood not hav got off with yure lives at Watkins, for the vary spirit which mooved him to kauz yure arrest for the trivial matter ov selling a kopy ov "Kupid's Yokes" wood, had he the power ekwal to his wil, not hav allowed yu to eskape. The intense hatred he feels towards Infidels and Freethinkers wood spur him on to take yure lives az freely az the same bigoted theolojikal creed kauzed thouzands ov the tyrants and murderers hoo preseded him to akt in a similar manner.

The Kaptin sez he sees it klearly that the konflikt must kum between the forces ov errer and the powers of truth—theology and superstishun on the wun side and sienze and truth on the uther. Tha ar in dedly antagonizm, and the strife cannot be ended until wun or the uther proves the viktor. To hiz mind thare cannot be eny dout az to which will proov triumfant at last. It is rekorded in the book ov fate that the week and the false must go to the wall, while the strong and the tru must be the konkeror, never again to be subdued nor superseded. He sez this Watkins petty attempt to hold up the

falling temple ov superstishun will proov a kompleet faleure. Messrs. Waldo, Hurd & Ko. will be az unable to keep bak the lite ov siense and truth az tha wood be to keep our glorius old sun from rising in the morning. The peepel are kalling for the lite ov truth, which iz dawning upon the wurd, and all the preests hoo are making thare living in the form ov good salarys for keeping up the old fraud, and all the pandering and trukling jujes hoo ar willing to sell thare honor and independense to pleeze the preestly klass cannot keep the sun ov truth and nolej from shedding its lite over the erth.

The Kaptin went on in this wa for a long time, and with vary much ov emfasis. I cannot remember all he sed, and I kood not repeat it if I wood. I am almost afrade that yu and yure reeders wil think I am loozing my fathe in the blessed Kristyan relij-un by what I hav alreddy reported to yu ov the wurd ov uthers. But I beg yu to bare in mind that I am only telling you what uthers sa, and not what I think myself. It iz but justise to yu, az wel az to Mr. Greenfeeld and to Kaptin Smith, that I shoold report them korekctly. I hold myself fare and kandid enuf to do that, whether it agrees with my vuze or not. I wish it distinkti understood that my fathe in the blud ov the Lam ov Zion stil remanes stedfast, tho I must admit that when I heer Kaptin Smith poring out hiz ideas and konvikshuns, tha sound pritty reezonabul, and I cannot find good arguments to rebut them.

I waz glad when the Kaptin waz going on at such a rate that my wife waz not in the room; for if she had ben, I no the devil wood hav ben to pa in about 3 minits; but I ges if she had ben thare he wood hav

ben a littel kareful ov her feelings, for I hav notised on 2 or 3 okkashuns that he waz sort ov kaushus in hiz remarks when she waz prezent, and he told me az much wunse when we ware by ourselvs. But he cannot tawk to plane or to strong to sute Suzan. She drinks in all he sez, and I kan se by her kountenance and manners that it finds a responsiv eko in her mind.

I se, Mr. Editur, that yu ar offering yure paper 3 munths and a kopy ov a nu Poket Dikshunary with 30,000 wurdz all for 60 sents. I dont se how yu kan afford to do that, for that iz less than the prise ov the Dikshunary itself. I wil send for 6 kopys ov yure paper on thozse terms. Inklozed find postal order for \$3.60, for which send THE TRUTH SEEKER from the prezent time til January 1879 to this offis to the six names I giv yu belo, and a kopy ov the Dikshunary also to eech wun. I think I wil send yu an order for six more next week. I want them to hav the Dikshunary and to reed my letters, hoping the same ma do them grate good, and I shal pra from da to da that yure blak Infidelity ma not do them eny harm. I stil hope yu ma yet in time be brot to the lite ov truth az it iz in Jezus.

Kaptin Smith and Suzan both want to be kindly remembered to yu. I askt wife if she wood not send yu her luv, and yu aut to hav seen her spit fire and fome at the mouth. Sed she: "I wood az soon send my luv to the Devil." That, yu se, iz the difference in fokes and the way we hav ov looking at things. Perhaps it iz a good thing that evrybody duz not take a noshon to the same person.

I beg yu at all events to reesev my kind regards

Yures in Kriste, JOEL SKIDMORE.
1st Deekon ov Zion Hill Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. VII.

HOME PERSECUTIONS.

ZION HIL, N. J., Sept. 23, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: Yu need not think yu ar the only wun hoo iz being persekuted for thinking and reeding and saing what yu beleev to be tru, for I am getting a littel tuch ov it myself. I hav ekspektet it for sevrul weeks. In fakt, I had not ben taking yure paper a munth before I made up my mind that I wood not be aloud to reed it in peese. I not only perseevd that I wood hav sum trubbul at home but that meny ov my good brethren and sisters in the church wood bizzzy themselvs sumwhot about my affares. And it haz turnd out jist about az I ekspektet. Zion Hil church iz very much disturbd about whot its furst deeken reeds and whot he thinks. I tel yu the eksitement runs hi, and, in the wurdz ov the inspired samist, "The devil iz to pa." I've seen this thing wurking for sum time, so I am not taken much by surprize. I ges I told yu in wun ov my furst letterz that wife Sally waz not in favor ov yure wiked paper kuming into the hous, and evry Frida, when it makes its apeerans I kan se that it throze hur into an unhappy state ov mind, and the wa she spits out hur anger iz not alwaze plezant to put up with. "Wel," she wood sa, "yu hav brot home that old Infidel paper agen. I do think it iz a downrite disgrase for that abominabul sheet to kum into this hous, and I do feel az tho it aut to sink rite into the erth, or be struk with the litenings ov heven, if that paper kontinuze to kum heer. I kant

understand whot God iz thinking about that he duz not bring sum terribul jujment upon this hous or the peepel in it if that ungodly paper keeps kuming heer evry week. I do sumtimes think God iz remiss in hiz duty, that he duz not stop all the Infidelity in this kuntry, and strike down the Infidel papers and palzy the Infidel editurs hoo ar sending out thare damnable darknes and unbeleef week after week. I do think he iz to blame that he lets this kind of thing go on the wa he duz from yeer to yeer. He haz to much kindnes and long-suffring altogether. It iz wel that supream powr aint plased in my hands, for if it waz, thare wood not be a singel Infidel left to kumber the ground in a week after I kum into powr. I think I wood not only exterminate the editurs hoo kondukt the papers but evry man and woman hoo kontributes to them, and evry printer hoo sets type on them, and evry binder hoo helps to make such stuff up into books. Yes, Deeken Joel Skidmore, if I waz only God Almitry for the term ov 3 weeks, I ges yure Infidel frend Bennett, and all the rest of them, wood find it out to thare sorro."

Thus my wife went on, and thus from time to time she spends her breth, and the worst ov it iz she kant keep from tawking hur unhappy feelings to other members ov our church, espeshally the wimmin, whenever she meets with them. She and Mrs. Jones vizit bak and forth. Wun afternoon in the week my wife goze over to her hous, and wun da the next week Mrs. Jones kums heer and staze all the afternoon.

Mrs. Jones iz a vary pius wuman, and undoutedly haz relijun enuf for eny 3 wimmin in the kounty. In fakt, she haz so much piety that it makes her

pozitivly unhapy. She sees a grate deel that is rong and that she haz to kondem most emfatikally. She haz such a keen sense ov smell for evrything that iz not just rite that her noze iz turned up in an unplezant manner neerly all the time. She seez sumthing in evry person that she kan find fault with, and she don't hezitate to do it, yu had better beleev. Tha do sa that she leeds her poor huzband an unhappy life, and she haz him so kompleetly under her thumb that he don't hardly dare to speak a loud word or sa hiz soul iz hiz own. But it happens she don't hav to go far from home to find imperfekshuns and mistakes. Her oldest dawter, Beky, waz deseved by Tom Fletcher, hoom she thawt wood marry her, and the rezult waz she had a little wun, and she haz never marrid yet, but livs at home with the old fokes. Wun ov her boys iz akkused ov playing a similar game upon Amanda Finch, only dawter ov Wido Finch, and who waz a favorit with evrybody. He won her affekshuns, ruind her, and then refuzd to marry her. It haz kast a blite upon that little family that never wil be removed. Amanda don't go into sosiety eny more, and when she attends church she hardly ever razes her ize or speaks to enybody, and her muther looks 15 years older sinse that unfortunate okkurrense took plase.

Anuther ov Mrs. Jones's sons sined hiz father's name to a 25-dollar note without the old man's nolej, and if the thing had not ben hushed up by the old man's paing the note and 50 dollars more with it, the yung man wood hav ben sent to State prizen.

So, with all ov Mrs. Jones's piety, and with all her abhorrense of the faults ov uthers, her own family is about az far from being perfect az eny in the nabor-

hood, unless it iz sum ov thoez Methodists in Pius Holler, and I must sa tha hav dun wurse things than most eny ov Zion Hil church fokes hav ben guilty ov. I am sorry to hav to speak in this wa about my Kristyan brethren and sisters, but truth kompels me.

Wel, az I waz saing, Mrs. Jones vizits my wife wunse evry uther week, and az she keeps her mind on the jump, her ize steddily employd, and her noze on the sent for sum faults ov sumbody's which she kan tawk about and hold up for konsiderashun, she iz not much bothered in alwaze finding sumthing to bizzy herself upon. About 2 weeks ago, when she waz making her regular vizit here, she diskovered kopy ov THE TRUTH SEEKER lying on the table. I had ben looking it over, and had just stept out ov the room and lade down on a lounge in the side room to reflekt on what I had red, and to rest myself. Mrs. Jones pikt up the paper, and kwestyund my wife in this manner:

"Why, Mrs. Skidmore, what paper iz this? It ain't a Baptist paper, iz it?"

"No, indeed!" replied Mrs. S. "It iz no Baptist paper, I'll assure yu. Thare ain't a bit ov the Baptist sperit in that paper."

"Then, whot kind ov a paper iz it? Do tell me. I hav never seen wun before."

"Why, if yu must no, Mrs. Jones, it iz whot iz kalld an Infidel paper; but I'm reel ashamed to hav yu se it. I try to keep it out ov site, but my huzband waz reeding it a littel while ago and left it thare, I suppoze, so yu kood get hold ov it. I wood rather hav burnt a lofe ov bred in the uven than for yu to hav seen that wiked paper."

"Why, yu skare me. If it iz so wiked, what in

the wuld iz it doing here in this hous, which aut to be the best hous in this hole naberhood. Deeken Skidmore iz our first deeken, and we ekspekt, ov kourse, that he wil not allow anything not strikly akkording to the hiest standard ov morality. Tel me how in the wuld he ever got hiz own konsent to take an Infidel paper, which I find lying here rite side by side with the *Examiner and Kronikle*."

"Wel, yu se, in the first plase, he konsiders Kap-
tin Smith hiz partikular frend, and Smith used to lend him TRUTH SEEKERS, and I notised he took an interest in them and liked to reed them. He next took a noshun that he wood like to rite a seriez ov letters for the paper to konvert the editur and all hiz reeders. He subskribed for three munths, and he haz been riting a letter for it every week. Don't yu beleev it takes about haf a da evry Mundy for him to get hiz letter reddy to send off to that abominabul old TRUTH SEEKER; and I kan se that he sees hiz name and hiz letters in it with a grate amount ov satisfakshun. When the new wun is bawt from the post-offis, yu aut to se how kwik he goze for it; and the first thing he looks for iz hiz own mizerably spelt letter. And I kan se by the wa he smiles and gloze that hiz vanity iz tikled kleeer up to hiz eers. He iz vane enuf to think that hiz letters ar going to konvert that wiked old Bennett, and perhaps hundreds ov others; but I tell him he iz an old fool to think eny such thing. I am a grate deel more afrade that he wil get konverted himself, and Suzan, to. I don't want to sa anything about it outside our own family, but it iz the onest truth that my dawter iz littel better than an Infidel. She thinks more to-da

ov that mizerabul old Bennett than she duz ov Elder Goodly himself."

"Why, Mrs. Skidmore! how yu do surprize me! Hoo wood hav thawt things wood ever hav kum to this state ov things? I feel az tho our church iz disgrased, and I regard it az my duty to se that sumthing iz dun to stop this heresy; for heresy it iz. If heresy kannot be put down eny other way, I beleev it wood be rite to go bak to the rule ov a fu hundred yeers ago and hang and burn thoze who wil harber it. Thare iz nuthing that I no ov that seems so bad az heresy, and when I think it over I do not blame our Kristyan frends, the bishops and rulers, hoo used to tortyur and burn and hang thoze hoo wood perzist in thare infernal heresy and wood not aksept the tru fathe. I don't no but it wood be a good plan to try that medisin a littel even nowadays. I ges if that man Bennett hoo prints this bad paper waz put on the wheel awhile, or waz about haf roasted by a green-oke fier, that he wood be indused to part with a littel bit ov hiz heresy and unbeleef. Thare waz probably sumthing vary perswasiv in the use ov thoze severe applianses that tha used to uze a fu hundred yeers ago to korrekt the tendensy to go astra which waz shown by thoze hoo did not chooz to be diktated to az to whot tha shood aksent and whot tha shood refuze. I am much afrade that that kind ov punishment waz dropt a fu hundred yeers to soon. And now, Mrs. Skidmore, I am going to hav this littel biznes about yure huzband taking and reeding that TRUTH SEEKER lookt into. I don't think it iz right for a prominent member ov our church, and a deeken to, to be taking such a vile sheet. I am going to se Mrs. Kraghed, Mrs. Put-

nam, and Mrs. Studley. We will tawk the matter over, and then we will kall on Elder Goodly and giv him our vuze relativ to this departure ov the deeken's from the fold ov Zion. We wil also se a fu more members, and we wil bring such an influence to bare that the deeken wil find he had better throw that paper awa, never hav it in hiz hous agen, and, in prare and humiliation, seek the forgivness ov evry member ov the church."

"Oh, Mrs. Jones! yu friten me! Pra don't take eny such steps. If yu do whot yu threten, we shal be awfully disgrased; and I kalnot bare the thawt ov that."

"Wel, rite iz rite; I kannot put up with heresy and I wil not. I am going to do just what I hav sed. I meen no harm to yu, but I must do my duty. If I se yure huzband taking the downward path to destrukshun, I must do whot I kan to save him."

And thus, Mr. Editur, thoze 2 wimmen went on about yure paper and yure humbul servant, and I had to laf hartily to myself to heer it go on. And I had a good laf, too, with my wife after Mrs. Jones had gone home. My wife was neerly skart into a konnipshun fit about the matter and sed we wood be set bak in the pozishun we now okkupyd in the church, and we wood be forever disgrased. I replyd that if I never did anything to disgrase myself and family eny wurse than to rite a letter onse a week to THE TRUTH SEEKER, and to reed whot it haz to sa, I shood get through life vary onerably. I furthermore told my unhappy wife that I had undertaken to reed THE TRUTH SEEKER for 3 munths, and that I shood karry it out if my life waz spared. I sed, "Kum, Sally, cheer up; don't let whot Mrs.

Jones haz tawked kauze yu eny unhappines." Suzan joind in with me, and sed she did not like to se enybody hav kwite so much piety az Mrs. Jones had; and, for her part, she liked Kaptin Smith's religion much better than she did Mrs. Jones'. She sed she had much rather se her fater giv up the oflis ov deeken than to akt kowardly and be koersed into doing anything hiz konsunse did not diktate.

Sinse that da a good deel ov buzzing has ben dun by the extra pius soles in the church. Several ov the old wimmin, and sum hoo ware pants, hav taken it upon themselves to deside for me what iz proper for me to reed, and ov the grate sinfulness ov my reeding THE TRUTH SEEKER. A grate many hav ben to Elder Goodly about it. At first he tryd to kwiet the thing down by saying that he did not belev enything I red wood do me much hurt; I waz old enuf to not be led astra, and all that. But Mrs. Jones would not yield the point, and she haz kept on stirring up the matter until a speshal church meeting haz ben kalld for next Frida, the 27th, konsisting ov the adult members ov the church, to inquire into the propriety ov Deeken Skidmore's taking THE TRUTH SEEKER and riting for it also. It iz expected we wil hav a pretty lively time. Mrs. Jones and her klik wil ov kourse be on hand and do all in thare power, but I ges tha wil spare my life. I don't feel at all uneezy. I no I am rite, and I shal go on in my duty regardles of what al the old wimmen in town have to sa.

To show how undisturbed I am, I wil order in this letter 6 more kopys ov THE TRUTH SEEKER for trial subskribers and 3 dikshunarys, and 3 "Age ov Reezens." Sum hav herd that book denounsed so long

tha want to see what it iz. You wil find the names on the enklozed peese ov paper. Al to kum to this offis. The dikshunary yu sent iz a good wun, and the wunder iz how yu kan giv so much for so littel. I shal rite you an akkount ov the churching I get next Frida. In the meen time, beleev me wun hoo wil stand up for the rite. Yures truly,

JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. IX.

THAT CHURCH MEETING.

ZION HIL, N. J., Sept. 30, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: That kalld meeting ov the adult members ov Zion Hil Baptist Church to overhall yure humbel servant for the enornus krime ov reeding the wiked paper kalld THE TRUTH SEEKER kame off, akording to notis, last Frida afternoon, at thre o'klok. Thoze interested in having me brawt to punishment for daring to be so ungodly had taken panes to se that evry grone member ov the church reseved a notis ov this meeting; and az it waz a kase so unusual for Deeken Skidmore to be halld over the koles, thare waz a pritty good turnout. Thare wer at least 10 farmers thare hoo left thare work and drest up in thare Sunda-go-to-meeting klothes, and thare wer more than 40 wimmen, with thare best fiksings on; and yu wood suppose, had yu seen us all, that it waz sum gala-da affare. The children and yung fokes under aje ware left at home. The meeting, ov korse, took plase in the church.

Sally and Suzan and I started in good sezon, and got

thare before haf a duzen had arrived. We went rite to our pu, which iz up klose to the pulpit, and I had an interesting time az I sat kind o' sidewize and notisd the brethren and sisters as tha kame in. Sum looked az solum az tho tha wer going to a funeral, and others had a rogish smirk on thare kountenanses, az tho tha wèr going to a wedding. Az many az haf a dozen kast a sly glanse at me when they kame up forward, az much az to sa, "Keep a stiff upper lip, Joel; don't be skart at what Mrs. Jones and her krowd kan do."

Wel, that waz just the wa I felt. Tho it waz the furst time I waz ever komplaned ov in the church, and the furst time I had ever ben kalld to an akkount for anything I had sed or dun, I didn't feel a bit more unezy than I do this minit, or when I go to bed at nite.

At 3, presisely, Elder Goodly kame in with hiz most solum vizaj on. He lookt for all the wurd az tho hiz nearest frend waz condemd to be shot and the our ov exekushun had kum. Az he past my pu he halted a minit and took me by the hand, and whisperd, "Brother Skidmore, I hope yu ar wel." To which I whisperd bak, "Thank yu, Elder Goodly, I never felt better in my life." A fu ov the others spoke az tha kum up neer to our pu, sum looking cheerful and others looking awful grave. I kood not help smiling internally to notis all this, and to think yu waz the innosent kauz ov all this big adoo about nothing. If it had not ben for THE TRUTH SEEKER, this meeting never wood hav taken plase.

At 10 minits past 3 Elder Goodly roze and made a solum prare. I never saw a more sad expreshun on

hiz kountenance. He lookt az tho 20 tuns wate waz baring down upon his sole. He prade thus:

"O heavenly Father, we humbly implore the to draw neer unto us on this speshal okkashun and watch over the deliberashuns for which we ar kalld together. Ma charity and wizdom guvern our akshuns; and oh, ma we be kontroled in whot we do here to-da by the blessed Golden Rule which thou tauteest when here on the erth—to do unto others az we wood tha shoold do unto us. Ma we exersize the same charity and forbaranse that we wood be pleezd to hav extended unto us under similer surkumstances. Ma we be slo to kondem and kwik to forgiv. Ma we not, most mersiful Father, be influensed by a spirit ov self-richusnes or unforgivnes. Ma we all feel the spirit ov kindness towards the good brother hooze kondukt we hav met here this da to examin and konsider. He haz for meny yeers ben a pillar in this thy church, and we hav evry konfidence to beleev that he iz a man ov owesty and integrity hoo duz not wish to kommit eny offense aganst thy holy kauz nor aganst the welfare ov eny human being. If, most mersiful Father, he haz ben to sum degre drawn aside by the wiles ov the evil wun; if he, unkonshusly to himself, haz ben indused to follo in eny by and forbidden paths, do, O Lord, tuch hiz hart with the rod ov thy spirit, and do, deer Father, bring him bak to thy holy fold agen. Do not suffer him to wander in the blind mazes ov unbeleef. Ma he not lissen to the delusiv song, skeptisizm; ma he not stumbel over the obstrukshuns ov dout; but O, may he hav lite from thy holy kountenance that wil leed him in the wa ov truth and richusnes, az he haz heretofore wawkd. If the evil influense ov the

devil, in the form ov an ungodly paper, which iz undoubtedly printed to draw soles astra and to drag them down to the rejuns of darkness and damnashun, az sum ov the good sisters and brothers ov this church do verily beleev, then, O God, we pra thee, ma the arm and the hand that weeld the pen that rites that paper be paralyzed by a tuch ov thy power so that it kannot agen be brawt into the servis ov the Adversary of soles. Let hiz days be not length-end in this fare land, but ma he be kut off from mong men, and ma he find hiz just dezerts in that lake ov sulfurus fier whare damd viktimz ov evil kry out kontinually in the terribul torture, which tha kannot eskape, and which wil never end. O Father, we realize whot a fearful thing it iz to be the meens ov dragging soles down to destrukshun, and we feel asshured that in thy retributiv justis thou wilt meet out such a venjful rekompense ov damnashun and agony az no man kan endure by hiz own power for the term ov a singul our, and that but for the power imparted expressly by thee, not a being, in the body or out, kood endure the burning agony for a singul minit. Lord, we no thy kindness and mersy iz grate. Thou dost giv life and enduranse to all thy kreetyures, sum to partake ov everlasting bliss, but far more to suffer such akute angwish and agony az no human being iz kapable of konseeving ov, and this bekauz tha wil not harken to thy voise, and wil dis-oba thy law and beleev that which rezon sez iz tru. Thus, mersiful God, hast thou shone us how delusiv and danjerus iz human reezon, and how sole-destruktiv it iz to lisen to it for even the shortest spase ov time. Suffer us not to harken, then, to this siren song, this begiling chant which destroys the

sole forever. If eny ov thy littel wuns in this thy preshus fold hath harkened or ar inklind to thus besto thare eers unto this korrupting and damning muzik, we pra thee to stretch forth thy all-powerful arm and draw them awa from the danjer that awates them, and to hide them in sum sekluded retreat where the whispers ov the fel destroyer kan reech them no more. O Lord, az thou valuest the soles ov thy kreetyurs, and az thou woodst save them from the fires ov torment which burneth forever, let thy grase abound, and let thy protekshun be shed around all thy littel wuns, so that nun kan wander awa from thy keeping. Gide us in our labers this afternoon; keep us at all times from danjer, and infidelity, and deth, and at last save us, for thy Son's sake. Amen."

The Elder's prare waz very impressiv, and when he had konkluded a solum expreshun waz on evry wun's fase, and several wer sheding teers. I took it all to be on my akkount and in my behaf, and I wunderd how so meny kood feel such an interest in an old man like me, hoo had never intended to do vary much harm sinse he waz big enuf to go to meeting barefoot on Sunda, and rob burd's nests and watermelon patches at other times.

After the prare the Elder spoke, in the same solum tones, about the objekt ov our coming together; ov the komplantes that had kum to hiz eers damajing to the Kristyan karakter ov wun ov the mane pillars ov this church—wun hoo had dun more, perhaps, than eny other singul individual toward baring the pekuniary burdens kontinjent upon all institushuns ov the kind. He sed that for several weeks hints had ben dropt and komplantes had ben made

about our good brother Deeken Skidmore, and that for sum time he waz dispozed to pa but little atenshun to whot waz thus sed to him, but the komplants gru louder and louder, and more and more earnest, until he kood disregard them no longer. When a kommitty ov 6 ov the leeding sisters of the church, with sister Jones at thare hed, kame to him, and with all the earnestness ov injured innosense and holy zeel, demanding an investigation into the kondukt ov a hitherto respekted and valued brother, he kood no longer disregard their importunitys, and felt kompelld, az a sentinel on the walls ov Zion, to lisen to thare kry and grant thare demands. He sed he must konfess that he had approchd this matter with the gratest reluktanse and misgiving, inazmuch as thare waz no person living, aside from hiz own bozum kompanyun, for hoom he had entertained a profounder respekt than he had held for Deeken Skidmore. But, az hily az he respekted and esteemd that wurthy brother, he kood not silense the voise ov duty, and konsekwently this meeting had ben kalld. He hoped, in the remarks that brethren and sisters ma feel impelld to make, tha wil not be bitter nor vindiktiv. "We shoold remember, while we think our brother, Deeken Skidmore, haz gone far astra, that we all go astra more or less. Not wun ov us iz perfekt; not wun but what, evry our in the da, kommits sum akt or duz sum deed that iz les perfekt than it mite be. We shoold all remember that we ar all fallibul kreetyures; that we all need the exsellent gift ov charity to attend us on all okkashuns, and espeshally the prezent. Let me rekwest that evry wun hoo feels kalld upon to kritisize the kondukt ov bruther Skidmore wil be kareful and not unnesessa-

rily woond hiz feelings. Whatever he haz dun and whatever hiz vuze ma be on serten points, we must all admit that he ~~is~~ a good man; that he haz dun a grate deel ov good in this church and in this naberhood; that he had borne the burden in the heet ov the da; that he haz not only razed hiz voise in the servis ov hiz master, but he haz led a good life az wel. What iz, perhaps, more important than all the rest, he haz put hiz hand into hiz poket frely and kontributed most liberally. I no not whot we wood hav dun on vasy meny okkashuns had it not been for the jenerosity ov our good bruther. When this bilding needed painting so badly, 2 yeers ago, and it seemed that the munny kood not be razed to do the job, how wood it hav been akkomplished but for the hand ov our good bruther hoom we hav met here to-da to juj and perhaps to kondem? When the storms ov heaven blu down our steeple a yeer ago last April, and we thawt we wer to poor to put it up agen, how wood it hav ben dun had not this good bruther taken the leed in the matter and sed we must hav another steepel up inside ov 30 days? How did he do it? Why, my frends, he put hiz hands in hiz pokets and took out hiz munny and used it. He bawt the timbers and the lumber and pade the karpenters for putting up the steeple that now points to heven from the hous ov God in which we worship; and to this da he haz not reseved from the members ov this church haf ov the munny he pade out for the church from hiz own poket.

"And so it haz ben on meny okkashuns; he haz uniformly ben jenerus to the kauz. When we needed a nu stove last winter he went all the wa to Trenton

and bawt the stove and bawt it heer in hiz own wagon, and put it up, and on more than wun Sunda we shood hav sat heer in the kold had not his munny pade for the kole; and haf ov the munny that the stove kost, and the kole kost haz not been pade bak to him. And in my own kase, I kan speek from aktual experience.

"I preech to yu 52 Sundas in a yeer. I tend to yure prare meetings evry Frida nite, I kondukt the funeral servises when eny ov the member's ov the familys of the kongregashun di. I marry the yung peepel when tha wish to enter into the important state ov matrimony (sumtimes tha giv me a doller or 2, and sumtimes nothing), and I perform theze servises for less than wun tenth part what sum ov the shepards ov sum folds reseev in sum ov the large sitys, and I am sorry to sa, my frends, that it sumtimes happens that yure kwarterly paments ar not az prompt as kood be desired, and to tel yu the truth, I sumtimes get very short and hav not a doller on hand. On such okkashuns, and when meny ov yu hav ben in areers in yure paments to yure humble servant, I hav meny times found a good frend in Brother Skidmore. He haz never faled to respond to my rekwest for ade. He haz never refuzd me when I hav gone to him in this wa, and hiz share ov my salary is most alwaze pade in advance. I wish I kood sa az much for all other members ov this church.

"Now, my brethren and sisters, this iz a matter ov no little importanse. Even in matters ov relijun and in running a church, munny iz a prime nesessity. Fathe in the blud ov Kriste, partaking ov the sakrament, and regular attendanse at the hous ov God ar vary important and kannot be dipenset with; but

what kan we do without munny? I tel yu, it iz a pozitiv nesessity. Without it we wood hav to diskontinu biznes; without it I kood not preech to yu, and without it even soles kood not be saved. Now, my pius frends, I menshun theze things bekauz tha ar ov the gratest importans, and bekauz the virchews of Bro. Skidmore in this line must not be lost site ov. If he iz not perfekt in evrything, the verchews he duz pozess go vary far to make atonement for the mistakes he may hav made. It iz a tru passej ov skripcher that sez, "Charity kuvereth a multitude ov sins;" and I want to ad, So duz munny. A man hoo iz jenerus to giv to the kauz ov Kriste shood be kredited larjly, and it wipes out meny little fawltas and imperfekshuns. Let me impres on yure minds that Bro. Skidmore iz a vary important piller in this church, and that we shood menshun hiz fansid delinkwensys with grate moderashun and charity.

"Now, my frends, yu ar all given the opportunity to sa whot iz in yure hart tucheng the kase ov our good deeken, and we wil lissen to whot yu hav to sa. Sister Jones, we wil heer from yu furst."

Thus did the good Elder open the meeting. He waz evidently imprest with the importans ov the subjekt; thus he prazed my good kwalitys, and thus he seemed ankshus not to hurt my feelings. But, Mr. Editur, I cannot, in this letter, giv all the proceedings ov that meeting, and I had just az wel stop rite heer. I want to giv yu pritty ful detales ov it, bekauz yu ar deeply interested in the affare, and yure paper iz stoutly kondemd by thoze hoo kondem me. I wil rezoom the subjekt in my next, and I am not shure I wil be abel to tel yu all about it even in that. But in the meen time let me asszure yo

that throo it all, and afterward, I am stil yur pious frend,
JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. X.

THE TRIAL FOR HERESY.—CONTINUED.

ZION HIL, N. J., Oct. 7, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I wil now proseed to giv yu a further deskripshun ov the church trial which waz held over yure waward humbul servant.

After being kalld upon by the Elder, Sister Jones roze and showd in her manner and air that she felt a good deel of embarasment. She opend the kase in about this wize:

"Brethren and Sisters ov Zion church, yu ma think a little strange why I hav taken such an activ part in preferring charjes aganst our respected brother, Deeken Skidmore, but I want to ashure yu that it iz from a sense ov duty and nothing else. I do not wish to deny that the Deeken haz dun a grate deel for our church in wun wa and anuther. I wil not deny that when munny haz ben short and hard to be razed he haz kum forward like a good Kristyan and dun akording to the meens which God haz givn him. But he iz not the only wun that haz givn to this church, and hoo haz struggled to keep it abuv the waves ov trial and afftkshun. I no he haz not at eny time givn more than he had to giv with, and sum others hav dun about az wel az that. I no that we at our house hav dun sumthing to keep up this church. It iz very tru that we hav not dun neer az

much in the wa ov munny az Deeken Skidmore haz, but we hav dun what we kood, and, az I sed, he haz not dun enny more than that. But what if the Deeken haz given more than enny other member ov this church, duz that proof that he shal be alloud tu destroy the church by introdusing the most damnable kind ov heresy into it that ever waz hurd ov? What good duz it do for a kow to giv a big pale ov milk if she haz to up and kik it over az soon az it iz milkd? Now that iz just what Deeken Skidmore iz doing, and I am trying to sho up the evil ov hiz waze, to snatch him, if possibel, from the destrukshun he iz rushing into, and at all events to keep up the kredit ov our church by keeping heresy out ov it. If I don't giv as much munny az sum, I wil fite aganst the Devil. I wil fite aganst the seduktiv enemy ov unbelief that wood draw us all down to hel wer it possibul.

"Yu all no whut the charj aganst Bro. Skidmore iz based on. He haz departed from the fathe ov Zion to the extent that he iz taking an awful wiked Infidel paper, kalld THE TRUTH SEEKER, evry week; and, whot iz wurse stil, he writes for it, and he haz got other peepel to take the same vile sheet, and 2 ov them ar members ov this church. Iz this a small matter, my brothers and sisters in Kriste? Iz it a small thing for the first deeken ov our church, which haz ben established now ni upon 30 yeers, to go after stranje gods and to bring into our naberhood and our church the worst heresy that kan be imajind? Do yu no, my frends, whot kind ov a paper this TRUTH SEEKER iz? Why, it iz edited and published by an old Infidel by the name ov Bennett, and he rites and prints in hiz paper the awfulest stuff that

eny human being ever red. He don't belieev in God, angels, nor devils, and yet he allows the devil to rite for hiz paper, and the devil's letters appear meny times when Deeken Skidmore's do. Now, isn't that a pritty state ov things for the devil and our first deeken to be riting for the same paper, and the vile sheet to be taken rite in among us and red by the members ov our church? Kan anybody think stranje that I stand up for karakter, respektability, and truth? Ar we all to flote helplessly down the kurrent ov damnashun and no wun raze the voice ov alarm and kry out about the danjer that iz ahed? Besides being wiked, Infidelity is vary disrespektabul. If even there iz sum truth in Infidelity, I wood not hav anything to do with it, bekauz it iz not respektabul, and I do insist that anything that the first sitizens ov our kuntry do not reseev az respektabul and fit for them to aksept shood not be tolerated in our church for wun moment. So I hav set my fase aganst Infidelity and disrespektability, and that iz whot made me enter komplante to Elder Goodly about Deeken Skidmore. I saw that wiked TRUTH SEEKER lying on hiz tabel, whare he had just ben reeding it. He konfesses that he subskribed for the paper for 3 months, and we no that he rites for it regularly. Now, this being the kase, I leev it with yu all if Bro. Skidmore iz not gilty of heresy, and whether he aut not to be suspended from the offis he fils until he puts awa the sin that he haz kommitted, and if he wil not do that, to then sever hiz konnekshun with this church.

"I don't want eny wun to mistake the motiv which aktnates me in whot I hav sed and stil hav to sa upon this subjekt. I no sum wil sa I had better look

at home and pull the weeds out ov my own garden before I undertake with my nabers'. I am not un-mindful ov the fakt that members ov my own family hav not always ben as perfekt az tha mite be, and I no wel enuf sum ov yu wil think ov it while I am speeking heer; but let me tel yu that I don't think those littel family matters ov mine hav anything to do with the heresy of Deeken Skidmore. Whot my family hav dun tha wil hav to anser for themselves, and whot Deeken Skidmore haz dun he wil hav to anser for himself; and that iz whot I hope wil be konsidered here to-da. I hold that he iz doing very rong in taking that wiked TRUTH SEEKER while he holds hiz pozishun az deeken ov this Kristyan church and hands to us evry munth the body and blud ov Jesus in the form of bred and wine, which ov korse we no to be the real body and the real blud ov our Savyur. I kannot help feeling that this matter iz ov grate konsekwense, and that not another da aut to go over our heds without probing this thing to the very bottom. I hav sed in part whot I feel upon the subjekt, and hope uthers wil be az fre to speak thare minds az I hav ben. I ma hav a fu more wurd to sa before the meeting iz over, but wil now lissen to whot uthers ma hav to offer us."

After thus freing herself Mrs. Jones took her seet, looking very imperius and a good deel flushed in the fase. I notised she kast a rather severer look at my wife just az she sat down, az much az to sa, "Thare! I ges I hav about uzed up yure TRUTH SEEKER husband. It ma be I wil take yu down a peg or 2."

It waz kwiet for 2 minits after Mrs. Jones took her seet. Nobody seemd inklinde to sa anything,

and Elder Goodly lookt at Mrs. Kragehed rather intently, and asked her, in hiz blandest manner, if she had enything to sa. She aroze rather sloly, and sed she did not no az she had enything vary speshal on her mind. It waz her intenshun to leed a good Kristyan life, to follo the tru fathe, and to work fathefully in her own vinyard. She did not beleev it waz rite for eny ov us to abandon the old landmarks or to run after nu noshuns or nu doktrins. When sister Jones first told her about Deeken Skidmore's taking an Infidel paper and riting for it, it shokd her vary much, and she felt az tho, if Bro. Skidmore fel, thare wer nun hoo kood konsider themselvs safe. She waz extreemly sorry to heer, that so good a brother az Deeken Skidmore shood so far forget hiz duty to himself and to hiz God az to subskribe for a paper that waz direktylly oppozed to hiz holy relijun. But she kood not think that the good brother ment eny harm in whot he had dun. He did not seem eny different or eny less a Kristyan the last 2 munths than he had before. She waz afrade the akkuzashun aganst the good brother waz exajerated and karred most to far. She waz inklinde to think that the deeken wood soon see hiz fault and korrekt it himself. She did not beleev it waz nesessary to treet him harshly or to kondem him with to much severity. Thare wer, in her mind, but fu hoo wer perfekt and without fault.

Thus the good sister went on for 10 or 15 minits, and I waz plezd that she waz so kareful ov my feelings. Yu perhaz wil remember that I told yu that Sam Kragehed iz paying attenshun to our Suzan, and we all think he iz very ankshus to hav it a match. Wife thinks that littel surkumstans had sumthing

to do with the muther's mildnes ov remark. A good meny expekted she wood be more severer.

Mrs. Studley waz the next speaker. She dwelt strongly on the grate importanse ov manetaning the korrekt fathe and the grate danjer ov indulging in douts and unbeleef. It waz her opinyun that dou' and lak ov fathe wood sink soles deeper in hel than eny other krimes. She sed God hated unbeleef more intensely than all uther sins. He wood forgiv murderers and robbers and adulterers before he wood thoze hoo harbored unbeleef in the kardinal doktrins which evry Kristyan must beleev or take thare lot with the damd. She thot, to, that it waz far wurse for wun hoo had had the lite ov the gospel in hiz sole to giv wa to darknes than for wun hoo had never reseevd such favor from heven. She tharefore thot that it waz far wurse for an offiser in the church to giv wa to unbeleef and heresy than for wun hoo had never had such privelejes. In her opinyun no member ov this church aut to take an Infidel paper in hiz hand or lissen wun moment to the seduktiv arguments which an unbeleever in Kriste was kapabel ov izing, much les the first Deeken. She felt that I had dun vary wrong, and she hoped I wood repent in sakkloth and ashes and put far from me the evil paper which had kaused all this trubbel. She had not a partikel ov dout that the man hoo wood print such a paper az THE TRUTH SEEKER waz the wikedest man in the world and deservd to hav hiz porshun with thoze hoo ar to be kast in outer darkness where thare iz to be naut else but weeping, waling, and nashing ov teeth, and that if that wiked editur iz kapabel ov dragging down with him to the rejuns ov deth the

sole ov good Deeken Skidmore, it wood be like Satan encompassing the ruin ov the angel Gabriel. But she waz wun hoo kood not beleev that Deeken Skidmore waz to be lost and she wood not entertain such an opinyun. She beleevd this timely meeting wood kause the Deeken to sense the danger he waz in and to put far awa the vile thing he had taken to hiz boozum. She shood continue to pra for that konsummashun.

Thus, Mr. Editur, the speakers went on. Wun after another freed thare minds in respekt to yure humbel servant; but I kannot tel yu more about it this time. I think I kan giv it all in my next, for yu must understand that in spite ov whot sister Jones, sister Studley, and all the rest ov them hav to sa about the grate rong ov my riting yu, I shal kontinu rite on riting yu regularly til I am myself konvinced that it iz rong

Beleev me, yures truly, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XI.

THE HERESY TRIAL.—CONTINUED.

ZION HIL, Oct. 28, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I se yu had so much more valuable matter put in yure paper for 2 weeks that yu kast me aside, or rather let me wate til thare waz les preshure on yure spase. That iz all rite. Yu hav given me a vary fare sho sinse I began to rite for yure paper, and I must not komplane if I do not get admittanse evry time. I presume yu get a good meny more letters and kommunikashuns than yu kan

find room for, and ov korse sumbody must wate. It mite az well be me, a part ov the time, az enybody.

The next thing in order iz for me to finish my report ov my trial for heresy, and lest I ma be to tejus, I wil not try to rite in ful what evrybody sed. It iz not likely that yure readers wil insist on having evry wurd.

After Mrs. Studley sat down, thare waz a litel lul again, and nobody seemd anxys to sa anything. The elder sed we had kum together to konsider this kase and to heer each uthers' vuze, and he hoped thare wood be no bakwardnes. He thaut it wood be wel for sum ov the bretheren to sa sumthing on this okkashun. He askt Bro. Peter Sharpley if he had not a fu words to offer. Brother Sharpley roze slo-ly, and mezured hiz wurdz with grate karefulnes. He must sa, in the first plase, that he had the gratest konfidence in Bro. Skidmore, and he willingly aknol-ejed the grate obligashun the church was under to the worthy deeken, hoos influense and example had alwaze ben ov the hiest karakter until the present time. He regretd az deeply az eny person kood, the falling ov so good a person into the mazes ov heresy and unbeleef. It had ben a surprize to him how so sensibul and good a person az Brother Skid-more iz, kood be left to be so ensnared by the wiles ov the evil wun, and he kood not think it waz eny rong intenshun on the part ov the deeken. In hiz opinyun, the Infidel editur ov that paper waz far more to blame in this hul biznis than enybody else, and he waz only sorry that that same wiked editur waz not within the reech and power ov Zion Hil Church, for in that kase severe justis wood be dun

to a very vile man, and the church wood take unfaned plezure in making him a terribul exampel to all evil doers. He had no dout that had this kongregashun had the passing ov the sentense ov justis upon that Infidel Bennett, he wood eether be sent to prizen at hard labor for 20 yeers, or hiz life wood be taken from him in the most approved Kristyan manner, by which meenz he wood be plased whare he wood drag no more soles down to hel. He felt impeld to sa however that he kood not beleev that Bro. Skidmore had given wa to eny bad intenshuns, or that he had ment to be gilty ov eny grate offense before God or man. He hoped to heer from the good deeken, and hoped to heer that the feers and apprehenshuns ov Sister Jones and uthers wer without sufishent grounds. It kood not nesessarily be held bekauz a man took a paper ov eny kind or no paper at all that he waz deserving ov punishment, or that the brethren and sisters ov this church aut to expel him in disgrase. He thawt we aut to moov sloly and karefully, and not be to eeger to punish a brother. The good brother kontinude on in this wa for sum time, and when he sat down I thawt I kood see that a good impreshun had ben made.

The next speaker was Brother Steven Karter. He iz not konsidered an over-relijus man, and kriticisms hav ben made that he did not hav az much Jezus relijan as a member ov Zion Hil Church aut to posses. He duz not often speak in publik, and hardly ever haz much to sa about what God haz dun for him, nor about the workings ov the Holy Gost in hiz sole. He iz a good thrifty farmer, hoo attends klosely to hiz own affares, and haz a good farm ov 75 akers entirely pade for, with 700 dollers at interest. Such zelus

Kristyans az Sister Jones kall him a man ov the world, hoo thinks more about razing good kattel and hogs than he duz about foreordination, elekshun, total depravity, and the final perseverance ov the saints. He sed while he belonged to the church he beleevd in paing hiz share ov the expenses, and to do so when it waz du. He beleevd it waz a pretty good kind of relijun for a person to pa thare onest dets, and to make no wun wate a da longer than waz nessessary for what belonged to them.

He sed, in addition, that he had hiz noshuns about taking papers to reed. He did not kare for so meny as sum, for he kood not find time to reed them; hiz work demanded hiz konstant attenshun, and hiz reeding time waz limited; but he beleevd in the rite to take such papers az he pleezed, and az long as he pleezed. He hoped he wood not want to take eny paper that wood make him wiked, or that he waz inklined to hav anything ov the kind in hiz house that wood do hiz family eny harm. And he had that much konfidence in Deeken Skidmore that he wood not subskribe for and kontinu to take a paper that waz really vile. He did not beleev that the reeding of THE TRUTH SEEKER had dun the deeken a bit ov harm. He seems just az fine a man, just az good a Kristyan, az he did 6 months ago, before he ever saw a TRUTH SEEKER. For hiz part he did not beleev it waz eny part ov the bizines ov this church to trubbul themselves about what nuzepapers or magazeens the members saw fit to take. If the members pade thare just duze to the church and to all men, if they minded thare own bizines and let uther peepel's alone, if tha ronged no wun, and did what good tha kood as tha past thru life, he did not

beleev the church had eny rite to kondem that man or to hall him up here before the church to lekcher him and examin into all hiz privat affares. "Now," sed Bro. Karter, "yu hav just az much rite to kall me up and hall me over the koles az yu hav Brother Skidmore. Perhaps meny ov yu dont no it, but I do, that I take THE TRUTH SEEKER, and from the wa I feel now I think I shal keep on taking it for sum time. I herd Deeken Skidmore and Kaptin Smith tauking wun da about THE TRUTH SEEKER and Kaptin Smith prazed it in the hiest terms. Deeken Skidmore sed if I wanted to try it for a while that I kood hav it 3 munths and a good dikshunary for 60 sents. I sed I wood take it and giv him the munny, and he rote to the editur for it, and I am bold to sa that I find a good menny things in it that I like. I don't endorse all it sez, but it don't do me a bit ov harm to read it and az thare iz no law agenst my reeding it, and az I hav a perfekt rite to read it I think I will kontinu, whether Sister Jones likes it or not. And I will also sa this much to yu all: If yu take it upon yourselves to kondem me for taking what paper to reed I pleez, then my konnekshun with yu az a member ov yure church seeses. If our sistem ov religion kannot bare all that THE TRUTH SEEKER kan sa, if it is so eezy to be noked over that wun old editur kan nok it, I sa let it go. If our church and our religion hav got to be kept up by the destrukshun ov our individual rites, then I say let the religion go. Let us manetane our rites ov liberty whatever else we loze or keep. My advise to Deeken Skidmore iz to just take what papers he chooses to, and let thozе hoo don't like it help themselves. That iz what I shal do, and I no thare

are a fu more in this church hoo feel the same wa. If Sister Jones and a haf-dozen more like her wish to draw the lines, let them do so."

Bruther Karter spoke thozе last wurdс with more emfasis than iz kommon for him, and when he took hiz seet a littel buz went round among the audiense, and I kood see that the speech we had just hurd had made an impreshun. Sister Jones' fase kullered up to her eers, and in haf a minit she sprung up, showing by her are and manner that she waz governd by sum spirit, not gospel charity. She spoke vary hastily and in a loud voice. Sally sed she akted for all the wurd az tho she was skolding her hired girl for getting a batch ov butter too salt. She went on in this wa :

"For my part, I think we had better giv up our relijun altogether or else stik to it. We had better eether be Kristyans or Infidels ; if we ar Kristyans, we hav no biznes to be reeding Infidel papers. I kan understand what makes Bruther Karter tauk the wa he duz. He iz just about az deep in the mud az Bruther Skidmore iz in the mire, and it iz nach-eral enuf that he shood defend him. But I wil raze my voise in behaf of Jezus and hiz holy relijun. I don't beleev in mixing. I want the pure artikel, and meen to hav it. I don't want eny Infidelity nor TRUTH SEEKERISM in mine, and wat iz more, I won't hav it. Thozе hoo want to reed THE TRUTH SEEKER, I suppoze tha hav a rite to do so, and thozе hoo want to go to hel, have a rite to do that also.

"I don't beleev eny tru Kristyan wil take an Infidel paper into hiz house, and hardly into hiz hands; and, for my part, I don't think much ov thozе hoo wil do so."

At this moment Elder Goodly roze and askt Sister Jones to wate a littel and allow him to sa a fu wurdс. "It iz my opinyun that it iz vary eezы to sa too much. It wil not anser for wun haf ov the church to drive out the uthеr haf. If we go on in this wa our church wil be broken up and we shal fall to the ground. It haz greevd me to lern that skeptisizm and unbeleef ar wurking into our midst, but, if possible, kontenshun and a want ov charity iz wurse. I am vary slo to beleev that eether Bro. Skidmore or Bro. Karter haz ment eny harm by taking the paper that haz ben menshund, and I wood hope tha mite se fit to remoov the kauze of diskord; but ov wun thing I am vary shure, and that iz that it iz not for the interest ov this church to get rid ov such members as our first deeken and Bro. Karter. Tha ar the pillers that the church depends upon, and it iz far better that we extend charity and the rite hand of felloship to them. I am not afrade that tha wil do eny harm, but tha hav dun and wil stil do a grate deel ov good.

"Now let me sa to all here prezent that I kan't se that it iz going to do eny good to kontinu this tauk any further. No good kan kum ov it, and I am shure the sooner it iz diskontinude the better. We want our good Deeken and our good Bruther Karter to remane with us, and to help bare the burden az tha hav dun. If tha want to reed any paper publishd in the wurd, tha hav the rite to do so. My desizhun iz that we return to our homes and laber to kultivate the spirit ov charity, and not to be looking for falts in wun another. Thozе who kan so eezily se rongс in a brother or sister had better serch thare own harts

and be sure that tha ar not harboring wurse falts in themselves than taa ar kondeming in thare brother. I sertainly kan still take Brother Skidmore by the hand az korjally az ever; and I must sa I hav strong pursonal reezuns that no rupecher is made with him or Brother Karter. Let us pra."

Then the elder made a very smooth, passifying prare, asking God to fil all our soles with charity and to inkrese the luv element in us, &c.

After this he dismist us and requested that fu or no remarks be made about what had past here.

We drove direktly home, and Sally sed on the wa that she thant that Mrs. Jones mite feel cheep enuf, and that for her part she waz ashamed ov her.

Suzan laft out loud and sed she kood feel nothing but kontempt for Mrs. Medlesum Jones; and she hoped the old bizzy-body wood attend to her own bizness and let uthers alone.

I do not feel at all disturbed. I shall kontinu, Mr. Editur, to red yure paper. My 3 months iz now out, and I send yu herewith \$3 for a yeer. I also inklose \$1.80 for 3 trial subskribers for 3 months, with the premium. Send, to, the "Age of Reezun" and wun dikshunary. Very respektfully yures,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XII.

REFLECTIONS ON THE TRIAL.

ZION HIL, N. J., Nov. 4, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: That trial ov mine waz kwite an episode in our littel kcommunity. Nothing haz happend for a long time that haz kreated more eksitement and given the gossips more food for tawk. Ov kourse a good meny, like Sister Jones, ar down on me, and think I aut to hav ben far more severely handled for reeding such an out-and-out Infidel paper az THE TRUTH SEEKER, az wel az to kontribute to its kolumns and to induse uthers persons to take it. Meny ov this klass think Elder Goodly choked off the trial to kwik, and did not allow meny to expres thare vues in the matter. Sum go so far az to sa that Sister Jones waz rite, and that she aut to hav ben allowd to run Deeken Skidmore out ov the church, for the reezon that the church kan never prosper if it allows its deekens and leeding members to be Infidels or to reed Infidel papers. Sister Jones haz gone so far az to sa that if this thing iz kept up she and haf a dozen more hoo beleev a thouzand times more in Jezus and hiz saving blud than tha do in all the reezon, siense, nacheral laws, and orijinal kauzes, wil leev the church. She sez she wood rather be with Jezus for the spase ov ten minnits than to hav all the Infidel nolej and siense thare iz in the world. To heer her go on, wun wood think she really haz intervues with Jezus, and that he tawks to her and kareses her the same az he wood a pet child. But I hav ben threw all this for too meny yeers to beleev eny such pretenshuns. I hav lernt

that it iz all in the imajinashun, and that thoze hoo hav the most vivid imajinashuns and kan draw upon them the most frely, or thoze, perhaps, hoo ar not, in the ordinary affares ov life, the most reliable in matters ov fakt, hav the gratest storys to tel about Jezus—how he looks, whot he sez to them, whot the Holy Gost sez to them, and all that; but I don't take much stok in eny fancy tawk ov that kind. A person mite az wel undertake to tell me whot the man in the moon dreemd 3 weeks before the 4th ov July.

On the uther hand, there are a good meny in our church hoo disapproov ov the kourse that Sister Jones took, and sa that if she had ben aloud to keep on in the wa she began, she wood soon hav broken the church all to peeses. Meny ov theze think Elder Goodly did not do kwite rite to let the mischeef-making woman go az far az he did, but tha ar glad that he choked her off so erly and sent her home about her biznes, even if it did make her az mad az a hornet. It waz prity kleeer to be seen that the Elder saw that he had "put hiz foot in it," and that when he perseevd that the effekts ov the trial, if kontinued, wood be to drive out ov the church sum ov its welthiest and most responsibel members, he desided that it wood not do to karry the joke to far. Kaptin Smith sez the Elder began to feer for hiz own salary. If Deeken Skidmore, Mr. Karter, and a fu more like them shood withdraw or be expeld, it wood be pretty hard sledding for the rest, and it waz more than doubtful whether the Elder's salary wood be forthcoming when he needed it. I tel yu, Mr. Editur, the finanses ov a church ar wun ov the most important items in the hull biznes. I

hav notist during the meny yeers that I hav ben konnekted with church matters that munny iz ov the furst konsekwense. The preechers often kall it the root ov all evil, but unless tha hav it tha wil not preech. No matter how much konsern tha ma feel for soles, tha wil not preech nor pra for them long without munny. I hav more than wunse sed that if all the munny now pade to klerjymen waz to be suddenly stopt, the preeching and praing wood stop also, and the poor dying soles mite all go to hel for all that wood be dun to prevent it by the klergy. It iz perhaps hard to juj them that wa; but let eny man that feels interested in the matter look at it for a minnit. We no the shumaker and the blaksmith wil not work without pa; the karpenter and the briklayer expekt thare pa or tha wil not work; the doctor and the lawyer expekt thares or tha wil not work. The almyty doller seems to be ov the furst konsekwense to all ov them, and to the preecher fully az much az eny ov them. No pa, no preech, iz the prinsipel tha akt upon. Altho tha konsider themselves charged with the saving ov human soles, I feel thare wood hardly wun be saved if the preechers did not hav the doller before thare ize to insite them on and to stimulate them to thare duty. Yu must pardon me if I expres the fakt I hav sumtimes entertaned, that the preechers gave the doller far to much importanse in the biznes. It looks az tho tha lernd the avokashun ov preeching just az a yuth lerns eny other trade—for the living it affords him—and that he pursues it just so long az it pays him to do so, and no longer. I hav herd the remark made, among relijus peepel too, that in a family of boys, when the different trades were pikd out for them to

lern, the dullest ware assined to be klerjymen, leev-
ing the smarter wuns for lawyers, dokters, masheen-
ists, and so forth. This iz sed to be dun bekauz les
orijinal talent iz rekward to be a minister than in
eny other kind ov biznes. Kum to look at it, thare
iz not vary much advance made in relijun. We hav
improovments in masheenery, agrikultural imple-
ments, karrijes, and almost everything else, but in
relijun and kreeds thare iz vary littel chanje. With
the exsepshun ov leeving out sum ov the sulfer, and
painting the devil les blak than formerly, I kan't se
that much chanje haz ben made sinse I waz a boy.
Tha tel us the same anekdotes and giv us the same
theories that tha used to 40 yeers ago. I hav sum-
times wunderd if this iz to go on hundreds ov yeers
longer, az it haz for hundreds ov yeers in the past,
and whether even theolojy shood not partake ov the
spirit ov progress and advancement, the same az
everything else. I hav kwestyund the probability
ov all the truth in theolojy having ben diskoverd
neer 2 thouzand yeers ago, while it waz not the kase
in eny other branch ov nolej or siense. Az I sed,
theolojy iz the only thing in which improovments
hav not ben made, and in which the improovd lite
ov the later senturys hav not kauzd the opinyuns ov
the older senturys to be set aside.

But I must not sa to much in this line, or yure
readers ma think I am weekening in my fathe. I
hav only alluded to the thawts that hav run thru
my mind. Az it kannot be expektet that truth wil
chanje, so, if theolojy iz tru, perhaps we shood not
expekt that it shood undergo meny alterashuns. If,
however, I kood hav the revizhun ov it and leev it
just az tru az it iz now, there are several points which

I wood like to chanje so az to soften down and mol-
lify them somewhot in the ize ov thozoe hoo, but for
them, wood hartily embrase it. But this iz not the
subjekt on which I intended to rite this time, and I
wil let theolojy go by for the prezent.

It makes me smile when I meet my frends ov the
church to heer thare remarks about that trial. I
notis the more sensibel part praze whot Mr. Karter
sed, and tha ask me why I did not make a speech
myself. I tel them I did intend to, but the Elder
braut the meeting to such a sudden klose that I had
no oportunity. I tel them, to, that Mr. Karter ex-
prest my mind very nicely, and that had I spoken I
shood hav follode prity much the same line of re-
marks. In fakt I rather wanted to giv Sister Jones
and sum ov the uther over-zelus soles a littel bit ov
my mind on the subjekt ov a porshun ov the church
or ov a komunity desiding whot iz proper for the
balans to reed, to sa, and to think. I hav notist
that for meny weeks yu hav had a prity lively kon-
test with that kulcherd editur on a subjekt sumwht
akin to this, the Boston man contending that wun
porshun ov the public hav the rite to deside whot
books, pamflets, etc., uthers ma send thro the males,
giving postmasters, jujes, and juryes the power to
settel whot iz rite and proper for uthers to reed, and
whot tha shal be sent to prizen for sending thro the
males. Let me ashure yu I am on yure side ov this
kweschun. I am in favor ov liberty on the largest
skale, and am sorry to se such laws enacted by Kon-
gres az deprive peepel ov thare libertys. It iz even
better that men hav the liberty to do rong than that
theze libertys shood be taken awa. Eny enakment
that tends to deprive the peepel ov this kuntry ov

thare liberty or giv wun klas power to akt az sensor for the uthers, and that konfers upon kortes and jury's the power to send peepel to prizen for exersizing the rite ov opinyun or the rites ov an Amerikan sitizen, kanot be watcht with to much jelusy. When our libertys ar taken awa we ar no better than serfs and slaves.

I lern that Sister Jones haz ben in an unhapy frame ov mind sinse the trial. She sez the Elder shut down on her too kwick, and did not giv her haf a chanse to fre her mind; had she ben aloud to go on, she wood hav given the heretiks harder blows than she did. She stil insists that Infidels aut not to be aloud to remane with the fatheful. She duz not kare whether it iz Deeken Skidmore, Mr. Karter, or hooever it ma be, if tha insist upon taking Infidel papers, tha aut not to be permitted to sta in the church. She feelz az tho Mr. Karter heded her off, and she iz sed to be very much down upon him. I met Sister Jones over to the store the other day, and at furst she wood hardly speek to me, but I told her it waz foolish to let il feelings kontrol her; that tho she had tride to stir up a hornet's nest about my eers, I did not feel the slitest il wil toards her, and that I shoold indulge in no abatement ov the frendship I had before felt for her; that she had simply akted out her nature, and that she waz not to blame for it eny more than I waz for akting out mine. It waz by virc Chew ov her organizashun that she had an over-supply ov zeel and piety; that I perhaps had rather a defishensy. I told her I shoold think no less ov her good qualities than I had dun, and wharein she did not kum up to my sense ov right, I shoold not blame her for it.

The sister sofend down considerably, and sed she did not expekt such kindnes of feeling from me. She must admit that I had borne miself onerably, and tho she thawt I had dun vary rong in subskribing for so bad a paper az THE TRUTH SEEKER, and bringing it into the vary church, and indusing other memberz ov the church to take it, she must admit that I had akted vary gentlemanly toards her, and that I waz also a vary worthy member ov sossiety. She sed she saw that Elder Goodly waz much alarmd lest the investigashun shoold be prest to far, and he waz fearful lest I mite be so annoid that I wood konklude to leev the church rather than put up with to much medlesumnes, and she saw that the elder waz vary unwilling that that shoold okkur. "Now," sed she, "Deeken Skidmore, I am just az unwilling to hav yu leev the Church az iz Elder Goodly himself. I no we kood not run the institushun vary wel without yu, and before wun yeer wood role around we wood miss yu terribly. What I waz after waz to get the Church to kondem yu for reeding THE TRUTH SEEKER and kompel yu to kast it aside. I do hate that paper, and I kant bare to hav enybody I think anything ov to take it or patronize it."

I sed, "Sister Jones, if it waz possibel for yu to reed that paper without prejudis, perhaps yu wood think a grate deel better ov it. I don't beleev near all it sez, but I find a good deel in it that I like, and I kan't se az the reeding ov it duz me the leest harm in the world. Let us all labor, Sister Jones, to hav more charity for eech other." She shook me korjally by the hand and we parted good frends.

Now, Mr. Editur, I wil not detane yure reeders eny longer this time.

I stil remane yure respektful frend,

JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XIII.

GOSSIP AND REMARKS.

ZION HIL, Nov. 11, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: My wife haz about rekovert her uzual state ov mind and iz feeling about az wel az before I had my trial, and I hope the sisters ov the Church hav also about reganed thare normal kon-dishun. A grate deel ov uneziness waz experienced by Sally lest we shood be plunj'd in deep and lasting disgrase, and that Mrs. Jones and sum ov the uther prominent wuns wood kro over her; and the littel kommunity haz ben unuzually exsited, and almost innumerable remarks hav ben made.

Sally haz skolded me a good deel when we hav ben by ourselvs bekaus I hav braut all this tawk and kritisism upon her and kauzed her to hang her head almost in shame. She haz aknowledgej'd that she duz not kare how much I reed THE TRUTH SEEKER if uther fokes don't no enything about it. She admits I am reely az good a man az I waz before I began to reed it, and she duz not suppoze that it duz me the leest bit ov harm, but she kan't bare to hav eny stane kum upon our good name; we hav alwaze stood az hi az eny around us, and we hav ben looked up to az being fully az respektabel az eny ov our

akkwaintanses, and she kan't bare to lose eny ov our good name and respekt. She sez, wien she kan't hold her hed az hi az eny around us, she wants to la down and di.

She waz over a few daze ago to kall on Mrs. Buzby, and thare she pikd up a good deel ov the remarks that hav ben going the rounds ov the naberhood. I ges thare haz nothing happend here for 12 munths that haz kauzd more remarks in our littel kommunity than my arranement and trial for reeding yure paper; and I must sa it iz amuzing to lern what the different wuns hav sed. It duz sum peepel a grate deel ov good to help put thoze down hoo, tha imajin, hav ben thawt more ov than themselvs, and thoze hoo hav ben viktim's ov jelusy sho how reddy tha ar to help destroy a good name that haz taken a lifetime to bild up. I hav observ'd that thare piety haz not prevented the unfrendly remarks that hav ben made in my kase. In fact, the more pius tha ar, the more tha seem to delite to be sensorius regarding thare deeken. I lern thare wood hav ben a good meny more severe kritisisms made in reference to me, on the da of my trial, about my avowd departyure from a Kristyan line ov kondukt had not Elder Goodly so timely shut it all off by bringing the meeting to a kloze.

Mrs. Buzby told Mrs. Skidmore what Mrs. Skinner, and Mrs. Gadsly, and Mrs. Runnels wood hav sed had tha had a chanse to fre thare minds. She long had an envius spite towards our family, and tha wer glad ov a chanse to giv a littel vent to thare long pent up feelings. On the uther hand, I find I hav lots of warm frends in the Church and a larj number out ov it. Evry wun hoo haz fare, onerable

qualitys ov mind iz wiling uthers shood enjoy the privilege ov investigating and thinking for themselves, tho I must admit that our creed duz demand a uniformity and konformity ov opinyan that iz hard for sum minds to yeeld to. I hav had my own trials on that ground, and I hav sumtimes feerd I had not fathe enuf in all the kardinal doktrins to finally prove it to be the saving fathe. It iz a littel hard for me to beleev a thing enyhow whether I kan or not. But ov korse the Kristyan haz hiz trials, and if he kan finally sukseed in saving hiz sole from eternal nite and eternal torment he kan wel afford to submit to all the trivial annoyanses that he iz subjekted to.

It seems that several ov the extra pius members ov our Church—mostly sisters—hav blamed Elder Goodly for kutting off the meeting so short and not having more persons speek in referense to the heresy ov which I had ben so flagrantly gilty. Tha think evry member ov the Church shood hav ben aloud to express thare komdemnashun ov thare Deeken's reeding so bad a sheet. In that kase tha say I wood hav herd more plane tawk about my rong korse than I ever dreemd ov. On the uthar hand, I heer that thare wer 3 or 4 that wood hav kondemd the hul biznes and denounced it az a Baptist Inquisishun, and that tha wood even hav thrown my good frend Karter in the shade and made what he sed seem moderate and tame.

Sam Kragehed haz told Suzan a good deel ov the gossip he haz herd on the subjekt. Yu no hiz father iz also wun ov the deekens ov our church and iz a littel more pius than I am, tho most ov our nabers wil tel yu that my note iz worth 25 per sent more

in this market than hiz iz, and anybody hoo noze us both wood much sooner hav a klame aganst Skidmore than Kragehed, tho I shood sa that thare haz not ben a note ov mine in this naberhood for more than 10 yeers. I don't ask anybody to take my note; if I o them enything, I pa them and hav dun with it. But Bro. Kragehed haz not ben so fortunate az that; he haz ben konsiderably involved, and a good meny ov hiz notes hav ben floting around, passing from hand to hand, and sumtimes tha hav not ben pade til tha wer a good while past du, and wun man thretend to su the Deeken, and he kum to me and borrode 50 dolers to help him out ov his trubbel, and it waz more than a yeer before he pade it. I don't tel yu these things to brag or to tel too much nuze out ov skool, but that yu ma understand the situashun a littel. The Deeken iz a pretty good sort ov a man, and he iz vary willing that Sam shood take my Suzan for a wife. He haz stood up for me pretty wel in the kathauling I hav had az I kall it, and sez that tho he wood not go so far az I hav dun, to take an Infidel paper rite into my house, setting a bad exampel to children and uthers, he kant see az I hav dun enything I had not a perfekt rite to do; and he thinks it waz foolish for Elder Goodly to lissen to thozе old wimmen and kall a meeting to giv me "down the banks" when I had dun more to bild up that church than al ov them put together. He sed he liked what frend Karter sed, and felt most like going up to him, shaking him by the hand and slaping him on the sholder. Tho he sez he must be vary kareful az to what he sez and duz, and must do nothing that wil hurt hiz standing in the church. He sez a man kan hav his private opinyan and also

hiz publik opinyan; the first belongs to himself, and nobody else haz enything to do with it; the sekond belongs to evrybody. He wants hiz publik life to be such az wil meet the approval ov the church or the more pius porshun ov it. He wood be vary kareful and not avow an opinyun that wood giv offense to the better porshun ov sosiety. Sam sez what ales the old man iz, he laks bakbone. He iz most afrade to tel just what he duz think lest sumbody wil not be suted. But on the hole, Bro. Kragehed iz on my side, and he don't belong to the Sister Jones klik.

Sam sez he haz herd a good meny remarks about the trial, and the publik sentiment iz pritty evenly divided az to the propriety or impropriety ov my taking whot papers I pleez, but most all admit that I hav karrid myself onerably in the affare, and tha kommend me for the koolnes I hav shone and the freedom from vindiktivnes that I hav manifested. Sum ov the members ov the church sed that if tha had ben brawt up on such a charge tha wood hav got mad, wauked out ov church in hi dudjun, and told the Sister Jones party that tha mite go to gras; that tha shoold reed whot tha pleezd, and she mite do the same. Tha admit, however, that my koolnes and pashense wer vary kommendabul. Upon the hole, the hole thing haz razed a big eksitement, but it haz not dun me eny harm. I shal stand az wel az before with the mane part ov the flok, and my pekuinary ade wil be az akseptabel az ever. Let me tel yu in konfidence that a littel munny helps a man along wunderfully in this world, az wel in the Church az out ov it. It haz stood by me like a frend in my littel unplezantnes. Had I ben poor and without an inkum I wood hav ben turnd out ov

Zion Hil Baptist Church in no time. The good santes wood not hav put up at all with my taking and reeding such a paper az THE TRUTH SEEKER. So long az a man haz plenty ov munny and stands wel with the world he wil not very redily be turnd out ov the Church. That iz the klas ov peepel the Church wishes to draw unto itself; that iz the kind ov fish it likes to catch in its net, while the littel, poverty-stricken, insignificant wuns ar kast aside.

I beleev it wood do yu good to heer Suzan go on about this luv ov munny and respektability which the Church induljes in so largely. She sez thare iz a little else to thare relijun save a dezire to bild up a fashunable, respektable sosiety, to hav a fashunable preecher, a grand karpeted church, a fine kwire ov singers, with numbers that are wel off in this world's goods and able to kontribut hansomly to keeping up these first klas appearanses. The long fases and the pius looks she sez ar all a sham. She haz watchd them klosely and she iz konvinsd thare iz far more ov hipokrisy than onesty amung the professers ov relijun, and she haz found already in her short experience that professers ov religun wil desend to do az ignobel and immoral akts az thoze hoo make the loudest professhuns. To heer her go over the katalog ov insidents that she haz been noing to herself iz enuf to make wun think that thare iz not much in the professhuns that peepel make and the self-richusnes that tha indulj in.

Kaptin Smith and Suzan tawk vary much alike. He sez her remarks he haz found to be tru in hiz obzervashuns ov men and thare kondukt. He iz wun that haz wachd men klosely for many yeers and haz studied thare motivs, and it iz hiz opinyun

that thoze hoo profes an extra amount ov virchew, karakter, and respektability wil bare ful az much waching az kommon peepel and are equally az liable at last to be found out in underhanded and disonest praktises. He avows that he haz no respekt for a man hoo professes to be better than the avercj ov men, but when put to the test wil fall a pra to temtashun ful az eezily az wun hoo makes no speshal preten-shuns to verchew and respektability. He sez, "Shame on a man hoo tries to make the wuld beleev he iz better than hiz fellos when in reality he iz not so good."

Sally duz not sa much about these things, but when she heers them from the Kaptin and Suzan she shakes her hed and sez she noze the wuld iz awful bad.

Let me tel yu that to-morro morning wife and I start erly for Monmouth kounty to make a vizit ov a fu daze to our dawter and son-in-law, hoo liv over thare. We wil ride over in our own karrij, and wil make the trip with my flyaway bays in a fu ours. I ma hav sum news to giv yu in my next about old Monmouth.

Fathefully yures,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XIV.

VISIT TO MONMOUTH COUNTY.

ZION HIL, N. J., Nov. 25, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: It bekums my plezant duty to giv yu sum akkount ov our vizit over to Monmouth to se our dawter Sally and her huzband Steven. Wife haz ben anxys to go over for a good while, and my

biznes waz so wel along that I kood spare a week just az wel az not. So, on Tuesday morning, the 12th, Suzan got up at 4 o'clock and prepared brekfast, and before the sun was up wife and I wer whiwing awa in the direkshun ov Hard Skrabel, in Monmouth kounty. The wether was fine, and my bays had not dun much for a week, and tha just made that plezure karrej ov ours hum agen. Sally sed we wood not hav gone much faster if we had ben on the kars. I think thare iz more plezure in a man's driving a good teem ov hiz own than eny other riding in the world, espeshally if he haz good rodes. Perhaps yu wood hardly beleev it, but before 4 o'clock in the afternoon we drove up before Steven's store at Hard Skrabel Kros Rodes, and the bays had swet but littel, tho we had driven 50 miles. I don't want to brag, but I do think I hav got the finest teem in this kounty, and I don't wunder that so meny wood like to own it; but I kan't sel my bays unles I need munny much worse than I do now.

Steven and Sally wer expekting us, for Suzan rote a letter 3 days before, saying when we wood start, and Steven sed he kood tel within 2 ours ov the time we wood arrive, and Sally had got a good dinner pritty wel under wa, noing we wood be hungry. We had eeten the littel bite that Suzan put up for us, but the long ride and the kleeer, kool air gave us a fine appetite, and the chicken pot pie which Sally had prepared for us in her best stile waz dispatched with littel seremony. My wife, yu must no, iz wun ov the finest kooks in New Jersey, and she taut all her girls the same art, and thare iz not wun ov them but what kan get up a meal in excellent stile. And this I konsider wun ov the finest

akkomplishments that a yung woman kan akwire. When the farmer haz razed good grane and vegetabels, and grown good kattel, sheep, and hogs, hiz wife aut to be able to serve it up in an akseptable, healthy, palateabel manner. It seems like a sin to me to se good vittels spoilt by bad kooking, and I offen sa that girls should all lern to be good kooks in preferense to all other akkomplishments. I don't no ov anything that makes home plezanter and life happier than to hav a suitabel supply ov helthy eatabels on hand, and then to hav them well kooked. To set down to a tabel with soggy bred, haf baked, the meet haf kooked, or burnt to a krisp, the koffee thick and muddy, the pi raw, and doey on the bottom, with uther things in proporshun, iz a cheerless sort ov life, and it wood be hard for me to sa grase over such a meal with a good konshunse. I hav sumtimes, when I hav had okkashun to eat at sum ov our nabers and friends, ben struck with the grate differense thare iz in wimmen in getting up vittels, and I hav more than wunse blest my Sally with all my hart for her kooking abilitys when I hav had the misfortune to eat ov ether wimmen's kooking. In my inner sole I hav ejakulated mentally, "O, Sally, yu ma be hasty sumtimes in yure remarks; yu ma hav an ungovernd tung; yu ma giv me down the banks for sum ov my fansyd defekts; yu ma not hav all the grases and perfektshuns that a man mite dreem of, but bless yure deer hart, yu do not spoil God's blessings and turn them into kurses by bad kooking. Tho yu ma hav a few faults, I prize yu for yure good kwalitys, and for none more than by dispensing joy in yure own household by palateable, first-klass kooking." I don't want to be

understood that I think more ov my belly than anything else, but I do tunk it iz a grate rong to spoil good food by mizerabel kooking, az thouzands are konstantly doing, and never lern eny better. Sum wimmen are in the habit ov kounting themselves gook wives and good Kristyans, but I onestly think them mistaken in both partiklars; if tha are poor kooks, I don't beleev tha are eether good wives or good members ov sosiety. In my opinyun a woman iz not properly fitted to pla her part in the affares ov life hoo duz not no how to get up the food we eat in a proper, presentabel, helthful style. A botch ov a kook iz the wurst ov all botches.

Our dawter waz pleezed kleer up to her eyes to se us, and it seemd a perfekt pleasure to her to get the best for us that she had in the house. It waz the first time I had seen her since her littel son Steven, Jr. waz born. He iz now a littel over 3 munths old, and I must sa he iz a brite, pretty baby. I think the father iz the proudest man over that littel bit ov humanity that I ever saw. Yu wood think, to se him go on, that he thawt he had performd the gratest wunder that waz ever herd ov. If yu kood se him take that baby and toss it and karess it, and heer him tawk baby tawk to it yo wood think he thawt it the only baby in the wurd. The muther thinks just az much ov the littel thing as Steven duz. Yu kan see it in evry word and akshun, and with evry look ov her eyes; but she iz so kwiet and speeks so lo that the kontrast between her and Steven iz vary grate.

I tell yu we had a reel good vizit with our dawter and son-in-law. We stayd a week, and the time passd off very plezantly. We made the time a day

or two longer than we intended, and when I got home I thawt it waz too late to rite yu my kustom-ary weekly letter for THE TRUTH SEEKER, but I new wel enuf that yure reeders wood exlaze it and perhaps be glad ov the chause.

Wun da the 2 Sallys and myself—mother and dawter—rode out to se the kuntry round about Hard Skrabel, and I found I didn't like Monmouth as wel as old Huntingdon, and I feel satisfied to remain whare we are. I probably shal not emigrate to any other part ov the kuntry, but lay my bones awa in the church yard at Zion Hil. I hav got so worted to theze hils and holers that I don't want to leev them for meny daze at a time until I leev them for good and all, and go to okkupy the manshun which I hope iz preparad for me in the New Jerusalem abov the klouds. I truly hope that after all my efforts to leed a good life and do my duty so far az I no it, that it wil not be my fate to hav to take the uther rode to the rejuns ov darkness and terror. I don't like to think abowt that dark rode, and wish with all my hart that it had never been devized. I hav more than wunse thawt if I had been God Almighty I wood not hav had eny devil or eny hel to trubel myself or eny of my kreetyures. It haz alwaze seemd to me that that part ov kreashun waz redundant and had far better ben omitted. Sumtimes I hav thawt it hard to beleev, but the preachers and the good book say it iz so, and all we hav to do iz to beleev it and do our best to gard aganst it, and be vary kareful not to take that downward rode.

Steven and I went wun da round the naborhood whare he livs, kalling on several ov the farmers, looking at thare stock, and so forth. I didn't see eny-

thing that suited me kwite az wel az I kan, sho about Zion Hil. I saw sum vary good horses, but not a teem that I wood begin to trade my bays for. In kows and sheep we also kan beet them. But I am afrade yu wil set me down for a big brag if I am not kareful. I stade considerabel ov the tirve with Steven in the store, and tho his trade is not extensiv, I had an opportunity to see his nbers az tha kum in to buy goods and get thare letters and nusepapers, and when more than wun wanted attenshun, I helped him on sum things. Yu aut to hav seen me mesuring off kaliko, waing salt, and mezuring molases and kerosene. Perhaps yu wood think I had ben a merchant all my life. I kood see that Steven and hiz wife too wer a littel proud of me, and wer pretty fond ov introducing me to thare akwantanses, and I notisd, too, that tha took sum panes to giv my titel of deeken, tho Steven did not seem to valu it so much az Sally did. I ges the grase of Kriste duz more for a beleever than wun hoo has no hope in that excellent char-akter.

We all went to church on Sunday morning with the Methodists, hoo hav a meeting-house about a mile and a haf from Steven's store. It iz about six miles to whare the Baptists hav a church, and we thawt we wood take the wun neerest by and make it do, if it waz not just the wun we wood prefer. We herd a pretty good sermon on the subjekt ov the sekond birth. The minister showd kleeer enuff that unles we are born again we kannot be saved. I thawt ov yu, Mr. Editor, when I waz listening to that diskorse, and wishd yu kood heer it, too, and beleev it. I do wish yu kood feel the importanse ov being

born again, and wood try and hav a part in that sekond birth. It iz a terribel thawt that yu must take that downwurd rode for the want ov it.

The minister we herd waz Mr. Parmaly, and he iz a new man that haz just kommensed thare, and tha hardly no whether tha shall keep him or not. The man that tha had thare before him waz Mr. Turner, and he *turned* most too meny wayz to suit them. He had a nice wife and 3 yung children, but she did not seem to be enuf for hiz tastes. He waz too fond ov wandering in by and forbidden paths. Thare waz a prominent sister in the church by the name ov Mrs. Bowditch, who iz a gras widow, and livd in a littel kottej by herself. She iz very pious when full ov grase, and exhorts like a preecher, but when grase iz out, the Evil Wun takes advantej ov her. She iz sed to be kwite blooming and entising in her way, and more than wun good Kristyan haz ben led astra by her allurements. Preecher Turner waz her last konkwest, and tha sa he got badly struk after her. He waz offer at her house after dark when he aut to hav ben home with his own family, and several times tha wer seen riding out together, and a munth ago tha made a trip to yure city and wer gone 4 days. A man from the naborhood hoo new them, watchd them without being seen, and found that tha put up at the St. Charles Hotel, and passed themselves off az man and wife. Tha registered thare names az D. D. Hunter and wife, but he did not hav to hunt very long.

This was a little too much even for the Methodists, and tha husled him off in a hurry. Sum ov the leeding men ov the church told him he must get out at wunse, or tha wood prosekute him at the kommon

law. So he went, and the gras wido, to. The poor wife waz neglekted, and the church had to make up a purse to send her to her father's in Pensilvania. Mr. Turner turned hiz fase westward, with the gras widow with him, and it iz thawt he wil find work in sum other part of the vinyard, where it iz to be hoped he wil exersize more self-denial. Sinse he left, tha hav found out that he waz also pritty thik with 3 other sisters ov hiz church, 2 ov them marred and wun a yung girl. Tha hav proof pozitiv that he kommitted adultery with all ov them. But, Mr. Editur, I don't like to tawk about these things. I am sorry human nacher iz so week, and that that protekshun which the relijun ov Jezus aut to afford so often falls short ov what it shood do for poor week mortals. I stil pra, with Paul, that the grase ov God ma more abound, and that we ma all lern to praktis more self-denial and pra more fervently.

I wil not detane yure readers longer this time, but I wil rekur to this subjekt or sum other in my next.

I am fathefully yours, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

PETTER NO. XV.

MORE ABOUT THE VISIT.

ZION HIL, N. J., Dec. 2, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I didn't hav room enuf in my last to tel yu all I wanted to sa about evrything. I didn't menshun about my son-in-law's subskribing for yure paper. Ov korse I had to tell him about my taking THE TRUTH SEEKER, writing letters to it, and having a church trial in konsekwense, and he

got vary much interested in it, and sed he must take the paper that had razed such a breeze in Zion Hill. So he sat down and rote a letter to yu and put in a doller and a haf for 6 munths. Don't yu remember he put in the letter that he waz son-in-law to Deeken Joel Skidmore, and that he had married the likeliest girl the old Deeken had and that he wanted to reed all the deeken's letters and asked yu to send all bak numbers kontaining them? I had sent him a few ov mine before, but he wanted them all.

So, Mr. Editur, yu se my letters hav dun yu sum good, if I hav not sukseded in konverting yu to hav fathe in Jezus. Yu ar sending 7 papers to this postoffis that yu wood not hav had had it not ben for me, and Steven's makes 8, and I am going to send yu more. Thare ar 2 or 3 tawking about taking it, and wil as soon as tha hav made a payment and are a littel eezier in munny matters. That's what keeps a good meny from partronizing yu, the times are so hard. I shood think it wood pinch up yure biznes vary much. Yu must feel it severely. Since my trial I hav to be a littel kareful and not sa too much to fokes about taking THE TRUTH SEEKER. Sum of my church frends ar wating to get another whak at me for heresy, and I don't kare about having too much sport ov that kind. It iz not the most plezunt thing in the wurd to hav yure own nabers and the sisters in yure own church trying to do all tha kan to blaken yure karakter and make yu out 20 degrees worse than yu ar.

I se by yure paper that yu ar having sum experience ov that kind about theze days. I se sum ov yure brethren hav tryd to make out that yu ar a bad man; that yu defend whot iz vile and indisent, and

that thoze hoo akt with yu ar ov the same grade. Whot ales that Boston man, hoo pretends to be so respektable and so extra-virtuous? Iz he troubled with the green-eyed monster, or haz he an extra amount ov vindiktivnes? If I am eny juj ov the situashun, tha hav not made much by the enterprize. Thare ar 2 or 3 ov the men hoo hav pitched into yu hoo, I think, wood hav made munny by observing silense. I kall it the poorest biznes in the wurd to try to slander and tare down another's reputashun. I don't kare how respektable and kultured a man ma pretend to be, if he kannot tel the fare truth about hiz nabers, hiz frends, and hiz brethren, I woodn't giv a sent for all hiz respektability and hi tone. I set down a slanderer and defamer az just az meen az the man hoo steels. The latter only takes awa yure munny or property, while the other takes yure good name, yure reputashun, which iz the wurst ov the two.

But cheer up, my frend. I don't beleev yu wil be much injured by such vile attacks. And yure frends, with hoom yu ko-operate in defending the prinsipels ov freedom and ekwal rites, beleev yu ar korrekt evry time. I hope yu wil go rite on in the path ov yure duty, regardles ov the slanders ov enemys or the barking ov dogs. I feel shure tha kannot ultimately do yu eny real harm. So, az I hav notisd it, thoze hoo undertake to injure thare fello-beings by slander and false representations invariably get the wurst ov it and do themselves more harm than thoze tha try so hard to injure.

So I think it iz with Mrs. Jones and those hoo with her tryd to damage me in the estimashun ov thoze hoo hav nown me theze 20 yeers. I kan se

now just how it iz. Hawling me up before the church haz not dun me much harm. A few think a littel less, perhaps, ov my stedfastnes in the fathe and dout my orthodoxy sumwhat, but I kan se that the generality ov the peepel think more ov me and show me more respekt than they did before it took plase, while it iz a sure thing that Mrs. Jones and her krowd are not thawt az wel ov az tha uzed to be. Tha ar lookt upon az meddlesum, undermining karalters, hoo had better be shund than otherwise. I hav herd more than 20 peepel sa that Mrs. Jones wood hav made munny by attending to her own biznes and letting Deeken Skidmore attend to hiz. Thare ar 3 rules in life that ar pretty good to be governd by: 1st. Attend to your own biznes az wel az yu no how; 2nd. Let other peepel's biznes principally alone; 3d. Don't li about any person, yung or old—never damage thare reputashun.

I waz going to tel yu about sum tawk I had with Steven when I waz over tu Hard Skrabel. I take a great deel ov interest in relijus matters and ov kourse had to enkwire sum how the church fokes in his naberhood got along. I think it wood most hav made yu laf to heer Steven go on in hiz deskripshun ov the pius peepel in that porshun ov the moral vinyard. He said he took a good deel ov pleznre in keeping trak ov the good peepel hoo run the churches over whare he livs. Within 5 miles ov him he sez thare ar about enuf kristyans to git up wun pretty fare sizd church, but insted ov that tha ar trying to run 3 churches—a Methodist, a Presbyterian and a Baptist. The Methodists are the most numerous, and by hard wurk and hard begging tha make out to keep thare minister steddily at work

and to pa the moderate salary which tha agree to pay, tho' it iz dun with the hardest kind ov work and tha are often 6 munths behind with thare minister and when tha discharged thare minister Turner for repeted adultery, hoom I rote yu about in my last, tha ware oblijd to shin around at a grate rate, stir up the delinkwents and even borra 100 dollars to pay him off.

The Presbyterians are the next in numbers and tha hav bilt within the last 4 yeers a small church 2 miles from the Methodists, but tha hav the hardest work in the world to keep thare institushun running. Tha ar in debt 1,200 dollars on thare church, fur which the karpenter haz brawt sute and will forekloze the mogej which he holds if tha don't pa him off, which tha kan hardly do without a mirakel bein performed for thare speshal benefit. Tha hav got a yungish man for minister with a wife and wun child and he preches for 800 dollars a yeer, but tha are awa behind in thare pa with him and thay ow him yet 250 dollars on last yeer's salary, and nothing payd on this. Hiz wife haz had but wun new dress in two yeers, and the parson himself looks a littel seedy. Tha got up a fare last winter to try to raze munny to pay off thare dets. Tha had all sorts ov jim-kraks for sale, and playd all sorts ov games to get the fellers' munny, and even the prettiest girls sold kisses at 25 sents eech to help out the good kause, az that big Katholik church iz now doing in yure sity, but, after all, tha only kleerd 47 dollars and 50 sents, with 3 boxes ov fany goods left over for this winter.

After that tha tryd to get up a revival or 11 days'

meeting to try and inkreese thare numbers. Two uther ministers from off toards Trenton kame on and helpd Mr. Jonson, thare minister, and tha kept the thing pritty hot for the 11 days, and when all waz over- and tha kounted up thare game, tha had only wun 3 littel girls, wun old made, and wun haf-witted old man hoo haz sinse bakslid and left the naberhood.

The Methodists did wun better than that; tha got 5 new konverts at thare 2 weeks' revival, but it waz sed that it woud take all 5 ov them to make wun good member. 3 ov them wer children, wun waz a yunggish widdo about hoom a good meny singular remarks wer made, and which hav by no meens entirely stopd sinse she joint the church, and the uther waz an old sinner hoo had ben konverted 3 times before, and wil rekwire to be konverted at leest az meny az 3 times more before he gets to be a desent man. He got drunk this fall and whipld hiz wife so she had to la abed 3 days, and tha turnd the old fallo out ov church. Hiz time ov probashun had only ben out a munth or 2. Steven sez he wil be all rite to be konverted agen this winter. Sum ov the boys sed the Methodists made more addishuns to thare numbers by the unmarred girls getting into the unfortunate kondishun ov bekuming muthers without having huzbands. Tha kounted up 6 or 7 addishuns ov that kind to thare numbers—the result ov last winter's revival. I hope that estimate iz sumwhot overdrawn, but from the experiense ov Pius Holler, which, yu wil remember, iz klose to Zion Hil, I kannot sa but it iz tru, for, taking the last 5 yeers together, I think tha hav averajed haf a duzen illegitimate children eech yeer in Pius Holler

church, and wun third ov them hav ben deklard to be the preecher's children. That ma be an over-estimate, but thare iz a good substratum ov truth for the report. I hav told yu allredy sumthing about our Methodist nabers, and if yu kontinu to print my letters I wil hav sumthing more to sa. I beleev in letting the truth be nown. I don't think the wurks ov eny peepel aut to be kept in the dark. It iz good for all to kum to the light.

The Baptists over thare at Hard Skrabel are the smallest denomination ov all, and I am sorry to sa tha hav to levy on kwrite a skope ov cuntry to make a desent kongregashun. I waz sorry to heer how few thare wer ov them, and that the largest share ov them wer old folks fast passing awa. If it wer not for wun rich old man in the sosiety, hoo givs very jenerusly, I feer tha would not be able to keep up the meetings every other Sunday, which iz all tha try to do. Thare minister, Elder Boardman, haz 2 churches, 15 miles apart, and preeches to them eech every other Sunday for 400 dollars a yeer apeese, and I am also sorry to sa the brethren are a good wayz in arreers. May tha be able to do better soon.

Steven sez the mischef ov it iz the Kristyans over thare are trying to run too meny konserns, and tha are too much split up and divided and tha kwarrel almost like katz and dogz. The Methodists and Presbyterians are at swords points, and tha both hate the Baptists, or, at best, hav very littel luv for them, and Steven sez every church haz a ring to manage it. 3 or 4 in eech church put thare heds together and run the institushun az tha think best, and the uther members hav but littel to say. I am afrade

there iz sum truth in that, for the tendensy iz too much that way ever in Zion Hil, which haz, I fansy, wun ov the best kondukted churches in New Jersey.

Steven sed to me in hiz lafing sort of wa: "Now, Deeken, what nonsense it iz to try to run so menny churches, and for the sisters and sum ov the brethren to worry themselvs haf to deth to keep up church appearanses, when after all it amounts to vary littel. If tha wood take the same munny that all these churches kost all over the kuntry and all the preacher's salaries and spend it on thare skools, having better skoolhouses, better teechees, better libraris, and all that belongs to the bizness, it wood be better for the kuntry. The peepel could take THE TRUTH SEEKER and reed yure letters and the other good matter it kontanes, and other papers and books which tha kood kwietly reed at home and save a grate deel ov ware and tare and worry, and tha wood finally fetch up at heaven just az wel az tha wil by the kourse tha take now." The remark struk me with konsiderabel forse, and I hav ben thinking it over sinse. Steven may be haf rite.

How I do run on, to be shure. I hav ritten over 3 sheets of paper, and I must stop. Suzan sez I hav not sed hardly a word about her lately, and she feels most slided. She wants I shood remember her kindly to the Editur, and sa to him that she iz wel and reeds THE TRUTH SEEKER every week and likes it az wel az ever. She sez I ma also sa that she and Sam are getting along wel, but that no da iz set yet for the wedding. I am sinserely yures,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XVI.

A FEW REFLECTIONS.

ZION HIL, N. J., Dec. 9, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I se by yure last paper that won week from tomorrow yu and 3 others ar to appeer before the kourt ov Skyler Kounty to anser to the egrejus offense ov seling the littel pamflet kalled "Kupid's Yokes." You'll remember perhaps that I sent for a kopy and I red it but I didn't se anything in it to send a man to prizon for riting or selling. I told yu it did not agree with my old vews, but that don't make any difference. I hav no speshal sekurity that my vews ar korrekt on that subjekt eny more than others'. Mr. Heywood ma be rite and I ma be rong, but if I am rite and he iz rong that iz no rezon why he shood be sent to prizon or bekauz he duz not agre with Mr. Abbot and Mr. Komstok. Sending peepel to prizon on akkount ov eny opinyun tha ma onestly hold iz vary danjerus biznes and az evrybody's opinyuns ar almost konstantly changing on sum subjekt or other it kan hardly be none hoo iz safe. Evry person's vews differ in sum respekts from sum body else's and if it iz rite to send won to prizon for differing, why not send all, az all do differ in sumthing?

No, Mr. Editur, it iz about time that kind ov biznes waz stopt. I no it uzed to be karried on extensively a few hundred years ago, but it waz a miserable praktis at best and it aut to go entirely out ov use. If our nashional and state kourts hav nothing better to do than to spend thare time and the pee-

pel's munny to try persons for differense ov opinyun tha had better disband and get into sum better okupashun; almost enything onerabel wood be better. Picking up skrap iron and old rags iz better than sending peepel to prizon for not thinking akkording to rule. The rite wa iz to let evry body hav the rite to think az to him seems best and let him hav the rite to giv expreshun to that thawt and not to send him to prizon for doing eether. Ov kourse a man's kondukt shood be such az not to interfere with the rites ov others, and if he duz enything to really injur others in property or person he aut to be duly punished by the kourts ov hiz state. I beleev az yu do that the United States kourts hav nothing to do with men's opinyuns or with the krimes which belong to the states to attend to. The general government shood punish those only hoo kommit offenses aganst the laws ov the United States, and never for opinyun.

I am reminded ov what my muther uzed often to sa, "This iz a da ov small things," and when I think ov it that yu and 3 others hav to leev yure homes and go 2 or 3 hundred miles and be prosekuted for selling that littel harmless pamflet it seems to me offr kourts and our government ar dejenerating and really turning out to be pretty small potatoze. When we look around and se how much robbery and swindling and steeling goes holy unpunished and how konfiding peepel ar robbed ov hundreds ov thousands ov dollars ov thare hard earnings and savings by banks, insuranse kompanys, rale-rode kompanys and other korporashuns that ar got up on purpus to cheet peepel out ov thare munny, and not the furst thing dun to punish the theevs

and robbers, it seems that "Kupid's Yokes" mite be allowd to pas, for I don't beleev that it ever hurt a living sole.

Allow me to sa that I hope yu wil kum off litely at yure trial; that the juj and jury ma not be governd by prejudis towards yu bekauz yu ar publishing an Infidel paper and Infidel books. I kant se why an Infidel haz not the same rite to publish hiz vews that a Kristyan haz to publish hiz. Nobody iz kompeld to reed them, nor to beleev them if he duz reed them. If we pretend to hav a free kuntry it aut to be az fre for wun klass ov thinkers az for another. It iz pretty hard to tel among all the vews that men entertain hoo iz rite and hoo iz not, and az I sed before no wun aut to be punished for what he thinks.

I shall watch yure kase with a grate deel ov interest, and if the peepel ov Skyler Kounty ar bigoted and prejudised enuf to seud yu to prizon I shall feel like leeving home and going over into yure state and sirkulating a petishun for yure governer to pardon yu. I no I wood take a petishun around here in this kounty if it wood be aksepted or do eny good. If yu do hav to go to prizon for a while I hope yure TRUTH SEEKER will go rite on the same az it duz now. I think yu told us wunse that such wood be the kase, that the paper wood not stop if yu were imprizoned. I am glad if it wil be so. It iz possibel that letters and editorials from behind the bars wood be more effektiv than if written in yure offis.

I am sure meny thousands wil watch yure kase with grate interest, for I juj yu hav a grate number ov reeders hoo feel a warm interest in yu and wil

feel grate indignashun if yu ar sent tu prizon on such a pitifully smal provokashun. Kaptin Smith waz over here yesterday afternoon and we tawked considerably about yu and the kontests yu hav on hand. Ov kourse he thinks more ov the wurk yu ar engaged in than I do, tho I dont know az he thinks yu eny onester than I do, for I do giv yu the kredit ov bein onest and saing just what yu think. The Kaptin sez if tha do send yu and Bel and Mis Tilton to prizon on the charj on which yu ar arraned that it wil be wun ov the meenest akts that haz been komited in this kuntry for a hundred yeers, and that it wil be a burning shame and aut to dam, in the estimashun ov all good men, not only our pretended kourts ov justis but our system ov religun as wel. He insists that yure opponents ar aktuater bi the same spirit ov hatred and persekution that haz governed the bigots and persekutors ov the church for a thousand yeers. He sez that evry viktim that the church sent to the stake, the skaffold, or the dunjun, made it more and more odious and helped to dam it in the eyes ov an enlitened wurld, and that the same law wil wurk in the same wa now. He feels konfident that if yu and the uthers ar sent to prizon for such a trivial offense such unreezonabul oppreshun wil do more to open the eyes ov the publik to the real motivs and the persekuting spirit ov the dominant system ov religun than anything that haz okkured for a jenerashun. If such a thing shoold take plase I think the Kaptin wood almost fly off the handle, for he iz so fired up with indignashun that it wil take but littel to make it bust out into a konsuming flame. But he sez yure konvikshun and inkarserashun wood do good; it wood not only

arouze a deep feeling among all yure friends, but wood sho to all chzerving peepel the intoleranse and oppresiv spirit that aktuater church adherents; and we both agreed that yu are not the man to let pass unimproved the opportunity to sho up this spirit to the wurld. We both hoped, however, that yu wood not be konvikted, but be aloud to return to yure home to pursu yure okkupashun in peese.

We also tawked sum time about your Boston frend, the editur ov *The Index*. The Kaptin sed he konsidered it wun ov the gratest misfortunes that haz okkured in the Liberal ranks for a kwarter ov a sentury that that editur haz taken the stand towards yu and all that ar opposed to the Komstok laws that he haz, and that he kood hav dun fu things that wil make him more unpopolar with reely liberal-minded peepel. I saw he waz afrade that jelusy and envy had not a little to do with the kourse the man haz pursued from the start, intensifyd by a morbid desire for respektability and the approbation ov high-toned peepel. The Kaptin sez respektability iz all wel enuf, and he hopes he ma never looze his self-respekt nor the respekt ov eny good man, woman, or child hoo noze him, but he insists that he wood rather part with the respekt ov evry person ov hiz akwantanse than to abandon the prinsepels ov rite and liberty. And when an editur or a stikler for respektability karrys hiz esteem for respektability so far az to make rite and oner subservient to it, he only shows that he iz not the proper man for leeder ov brave men and wimen. Respektability, which in its plase, iz ov kourse well enuf and always dezirabel, he holds, az yu see, holy subordinate to the grander prinsepels ov rite, liberty, truth, and

oner. It iz not a star ov the first magniude, and it iz a grate mistake to try to exalt it to that pozhun.

The Kaptin kontends that yu hav made an earnest struggle for the prinsipels ov human rite and personal liberty, and hopes yu ma sukseed in manetaning yure ground and in konvinsing others ov its korrektnes. He iz utterly oppozed to the governmental supervizhun ov morals or opinyuns, and insists that the imprizonment ov such men az Heywood for the konvikshuns he entertanes and attempts to promulgate iz a deep and damning disgrase upon our government, which kannot be wiped out. He sez in futyure decades and senturys the man most offishus or instrumental in bringing it about will be regarded with averzyun and abhorrense.

I tryd to defend the moral side ov the kwestyun, and to show him that vise and krime aut to be saut out and krushed out ov the land, and that we never kan hav a moral, virchus community so long az bad men ar allowd to korrupt the minds ov the yung and to spred thare vile moral poison broadkast over the land; and I undertook to show him that it waz the duty ov government to look after the morals ov its subjekts and to protekt the rizing jenerashun. He wood not admit, however, that the inspektshun ov morals or opinyuns waz eny part ov the biznes ov the general government. Wrongs aganst sosiety and individuals he sez shoold be duly punished by the states in which tha ar kommitted, and so long az we manetane state governments the jeneral government shoold hav nothing to do with it.

The Kaptin kan rather outtawk me, and az he alwaze manajes to hav a good deel ov reezon and

kommon sense on hiz side, he most alwaze gets the best of the argument, no matter hoom he talks with. I must konfess that when I get into a mental enkownter with him, I am not over positiv in the posishuns I take, for I hav learned by experience that in most kases he kompels me to bak down or to aknolej the korrektness ov hiz vews. When I begin an argument with the Kaptin, it iz jenerally with the konvikshun that I will hav to agree with him before I get thru, and this iz not very hard to do, az he iz so fare and reezonable in his manner and langwij. I tell yu, I wish thare wer a grate menny more such men az Kaptin Smith. If thare wer no worse men than he in the kommunity, it wood hav but littel that iz bad in it. He tels me he haz no desire to do rong to himself or to enybody else. If it kums in hiz wa to do a good deed to a fellow-man, and he kan do it without ronging himself, he takes plezure in doing it. If everybody akted upon that prinsipel this wood not be a very bad sort ov a world, and we wood not need menny Komstoks to bizzy themselvs at prying into our affares. But, unfortunately, thare ar grate numbers ov peepel in the world—not az well-dispozod az our naber—hoo seem to be spending thare lives in trying to take advantaj ov thare fellow-men and to get sumthing for noothing—to get a living without ernaling it and make other peepel kontribute to thare support.

Wun duz not hav to look around a grate deel to se that this world seems to be made up on rong prinsipels and that thare iz a grate deel more ov the hog and dog nacher in men and wimmin than thare aut to be. Almost everybody iz super-selfish and iz alwaze trying to benefit himself at the expense ov

uther peepel. The selfish kwality in man's nacher seems to be kultivated more than any uther kwality he possesses. It iz, ov kourse, good enuf in its plase, but it iz to be regretted that it haz bekum to the extent it haz the kontrolling influence among men. If we wood all try az hard to make thoze around us happy az we do to take advantaj ov them in neerly all the affares ov life, we kood produse a much better state ov sosiety than we now hav. But alas! the world iz far from being what it aut to be. With all the blessed relijun that men hav believed in, and all the grase that haz been shed abroad over the erth, thare iz stil a very bad state ov happiness and morals existing, and I sumtimes wonder whether the grase of God and Jezus wil be suffisient to bring all mankind around to a state ov goodness and happiness. Menny doubts prevale in my mind; but stil I shal hope and pray on and not giv up to diskurejment or dispare. The grase ov God is grate. Let us all hav a share in it.

Frend Smith sends hiz kind regards to yu, and hopes yu wil kum out of yure trubbels all rite. Suzan duz the same, and even my wife Sally sez she wood be sorry to heer that yu had been sent to prizon. Yu sertenly hav my best wishes. Yures trustfully,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XVII.

ARRESTS AND UNBELIEF.

ZION HIL, N. J., Dec. 16, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I prezume while I addres yu this letter yu ar not sitting in yure offis, preparing matter for yure paper but hav left to appeer at the bar ov justis—az it iz kalled—to anser for the krone ov selling a kopy of "Kupid's Yokes." I shal, however, rite yu just the same az tho yu wer at home, and yu kan se it when yu return, or yure printers kan put it in tipe the same az tho yu wer with them.

I se by yure last paper that more trubel haz vizited yu and that yu hav ben arrested agen and stil for "Kupid's Yokes." Now ain't the authorities krowding the mourners a littel too fast? Kant tha wate til wun prosekushun iz dun before tha begin another? And ain't tha attaching a littel too much importanse to that small pamflet? Wood it not be wel to sho whare the small affare haz dun eny harm, before Heywood, yuresel' and haf a dozen more ar sent to prizon for selling it? I think thare iz reezon in all things, and enuf to sho sum ov it in our kondukt, publik az wel az private. Men hoo hav power placed in thare hands aut to be more kareful than eny other klas ov peepel to watch thare akshuns and se that tha kommit no offense aganst the laws ov justis and rite. Evry man haz rites, the poor az wel az the rich, the dispized az wel az the onerd, and in my opinyun it iz wun ov the gratest ronges thare kan be kommitted to deprive eny person ov thare just rites whether ov property, ov reputashun or

ov liberty. We are all very sensitiv about having our property taken from us unjustly, but that iz a smaller matter than to rongfully take from him karakter among men or hiz liberty. Theze ar more than welth.

I se this time yu ar arrested by United States authority, and for depoziting wun ov the pamflets in the post-offis. Indeed! Indeed! I shoold like to ask if the United States ain't getting short ov Lizen to arrest an old man and to deprive him ov hiz liberty, hiz karakter, and hiz munny on so trivial an offense? I thawt that the authoritys at Watkins belittled themselvs grately to arrest 4 persons for wun harmles littel pamflet, but it seems werse for the grate Government ov the United States to employ its marshals, its judges, and its kourts for the same exalted purpus. I wunder if enybody thinks yu did eny damaj to the males by depoziting in it a kopy ov "Kupid's Yokes?" Kan tha think that its few pajes defild or harmd the other books, papers, and letters passing threw the males at the same time? Unless it hurt the male-bags in sum wa or dirtyd the hands ov the klerks, or did sum harm to the other stuf being transported at the same time, I kannot possibly se how the littel book kood do the slightest harm.

Now, Mr. Editur, I think I understand how it iz. Nobody iz so foolish az to think that yu hav dun the slightest harm to the United States Government, to its males, or to its peeple by selling or maling "Kupid's Yokes." It iz nun ov that. Sumbody haz a spite aganst yu and tha hav taken this way to akt it out; and I wil sa that the man hoo iz engagd in this pityful biznes, whether he iz a Kristyan or a

hethen, iz aktig unfarely and unjustly by yu and aut not to suksed in hiz undertakings. I hope he wil not. I am sorry to se that that man Kumstok iz again after yu. I shoold think he had dun harm enuf to yu alredy without piling up more evil deeds ov the same kind. I only wish he possesd sum ov the Kristyan virtues that he klames to hav, in hiz grate zeel for good.

I must tel yu this arrest haz kauzd a littel exsitement in our family and in our naberhood. It made Suzan and I feel real bad when I red it out loud. I kood se the teers kum into Suzan's eyes, and she brawt her teeth together with extra firmness. She sed it waz the meenest thing she had herd ov for 6 months. She turned to me before her eyes were dry and sed, "Father, ain't yu going to send that man sumthing to help fite the unekwal konflikt thus forsed upon him?" I replyd, "Yes, my dawter, I wil send him 5 dollars, not that I beleev as he duz on matters ov relijun and fathe, but in these repeted prosekushuns I think a grate wrong iz being dun him, and I don't no ov any better way for me to ade him than to send him a few dollars to help pay the hevy expenses that all these sutes and prosekushuns must kost him." "I'm glad ov it," sed Suzan, "and I wil send a dollar ov my own munny, too. I want to help him a littel in hiz trubel." Thus yu se, Mr. Editur, yu hav 2 frends in Deeken Skidmore's family; even my wife, hoo haz ben konsiderably prejudised aganst yu bekauz yu publish THE TRUTH SEEKER, feels more frendly than she did. When Suzan told her yu were arrested, the good wife sed it waz too bad; I think it iz meen. If he haz no fathe in our relijun it

iz no reezon why tha shood trubel him in this way and kauze him so much anxiety. I think thare iz a better way to treet an enemy than to sue him and make him all the trubel possibel." That iz a good deel for wife to sa, I wil assure yu, and I waz glad to se her take so just a vew ov the matter. She don't reed yure paper, but she heers me reed it aloud, tho she don't like much ov it. I kan se that sum-times she gets interested and listens with pretty good attenshun. She wil listen to what the paper sez about yure trials.

It iz kurius how kwik news wil spred in a naberhood like ours. Yure last paper had not ben in our house 24 ours before the news had got all around that yu had ben arrested agen. Sum ar glad ov it, and sa it serves yu rite, sum sa tha ar sorry a littel, but the larjest number don't kare anything about it. On last Saturday afternoon Suzan went over to Mrs. Burnham's on an errand, and Mrs. Jones waz thare, and going on about yure arrest at a grate rate. She said she waz glad yu wer arrested agen, and she hoped Kumstok wood keep on with yu til he got yu in prizen for about 5 yeers and make yu stop printing such a wiked paper, and she hoped yu wood looz every sent yu waz wurth in the world, and that yu wood hav to die in the poorhouse if yu did not die in prizen. Mrs. Burnham waz milder, but she took sides with Mrs. Jones, and thawt yu deservd all yu got. Suzan told them that if it waz the Kristyan relijun that made them tawk that wa, she did not want much ov it. For her part, she waz sorry for enybody hoo got into trubel, whether tha thawt az she or not. She sed she hoped she never wood get so much relijun az to make her looz all sympathy

and pity for the human rase bekauz tha did not belong to the same Church she did. Tha thawt that waz pretty tawk for a deeken's dawter, and that she never wood be an ornament to the Church az long az she felt that wa. Suzan replyd that she did not want to be an ornament to anything or anywhere if she had to giv up the feelings ov kommon humanity. For her part, she took no plezyure in seeing enybody hav trubel, and especially wun hoo waz trying to do about az wel az he new how, and whot he beleevd to be right.

Mrs. Jones sed she waz over to the store, and Mr. Perkins, the storekeeper, had reseevd a New York daily which had a short akkout in it ov yure arrest, and tha were tawking about it in the store, several persons being present. Mr. Perkins iz our postmaster, and iz a vary fare sort ov man, altho he duz not belong to eny church; neither duz he kall himself an Infidel. He takes the *New York Times*, and, on reeding the notis ov yure arrest for sending indesent and obsene publikashuns threw the males, he sed it waz vary eezzy to make a charj ov that kind—much eezier than to proov it. He sed it waz a vary rong thing to publish a man in the papers, to go all over the kuntry, charjing him with an offense he had not kommitted. It injured a man's reputashun to sirkulate a false charj aganst him more than az tho it waz tru, and a man hoo waz thus rongfully akkused had vary littel chanse to korrekt it. Mrs. Jones beleevd it waz all just so, and she did not kare how much Kumstok held yu up in an unfavorable lite before the world.

Thus, yu se, we hav to hav our sa out heer just az wel az yu do in the sity. After a while it wil get

to be an old story, when thare wil be littel or nothing more sed on the subjekt.

Yu must expekt a grate meny peepel wil find fault with yu and kondem whot yu do. This will be the case whether yu ar rite or rong. No matter how rite yu ar, if peepel think yu ar rong tha wil kondem yu just az bitterly az tho tha new you to be rong. I prezume yu hav kalkulated upon this and wil guvern yureself akkordingly. Evry man hoo oppozes popular noshuns and opinyuns must expekt to meet a grate amount ov oppozishun and to be kalld a bad or mistaken man. He ma make up hiz mind that he wil be denounced az a fraud, az immoral, and az wun dezerving ov punishment. I am glad yu ar able to stand up agenst a good deel ov this kind ov thing. It looks now az tho yu wood need all the strength ov this kind yu ar able to kommand.

Among all the fault that iz found with yu, let me take yu in hand, in my jentel wa. I hav ben thinking for sum time that I aut to tawk to yu about yure unbeleef. Yu seem to hav a superabundanse ov it. In fakt, yu giv sum kolums ov it at a time, and number off the items az a kaptin wood number the men in hiz kumpany. In the last installment yu gav ov the things yu do not beleev, I se tha had reeched over 400, and I don't no but yu wil go on til yu get up to a thouzand. I hope when yu get threw telling us what yu don't beleev yu wil chanje off and tel us a while what yu do beleev. Let me sa to yu that it most makes meskwurm to see how meny things yu find in the old Bible that yu don't beleev, and that yu kan show up so meny kontradiکشuns and indesenses. I hav ben recding the Bible all my life and I never new thare waz so meny plases in it for piking flaws and

showing up its inkonsistensys. I don't beleev thare iz wun Kristyan in 10 that realizes thare are so meny defekts in the old book. I wood not be afrade to ventyure 10 bushels ov otes that even our good Elder Goodly iz not aware that thare ar so meny week plases in that divine volume. I must aknowlej that it takes me by surprize to find how meny defekts yu kan sho up, and I wunder how yu find them all. Yu must be pretty good on the hunt. I feel the forse ov the points yu raze, and kannot deny tha ar vary telling. Tha ar well kalkulated to shake the konfidense ov any wun hoo haz not a good stok ov fathe on hand. I find that fathe, even the kind yu mite kall *blind* fathe, iz vary useful to me in the diffikultys I hav to meet with. I remember wel a happy illustrashun which Elder Goodly made sum time ago when preeching about the importanse ov having the rite kind ov fathe. He sed it wood not do to kunsult the reezon when fathe iz kalled upon, and shood step in and help the sole in its struggles, neether shood we mezure them with ordinary kommon sense, but that we must exersise a living and saving fathe. He sed: "When yu are attakt with a fever and send for yure family fyzishun to kure yu, and he deems it best to giv yu a nawseous dose ov kalomel and jalap, if yu are wize you wil not stop to reezon with him upon the subjekt nor go to work to raze a series ov objekshuns aganst the korse he prescribes, but yu will just shut yure eyes and open yure mouth wide and swallow it like a man without asking kwestyans or arguing the point with the dokter. So, my friends, yu wil often hav okkashun to; when a diffikulty arizes in yure path, and yu inkleine to stumble over it. When yu meet with matters

that do not harmonize with reezon, or that do not kompare with yure kommon sense, don't stop to examine the diffikulty, don't stop to investigate it, dont spend yure time to look it over and over, but az with the kalomel and jalap just shut yure eyes, open yure mouth, and swallow the dose without squeeling or saying a word. A Kristyan haz to do this vary often. Thare iz a grate deel in our fathe he iz kalled upon to aksept that will not bare the klose skrutiny ov reezon and investigashun, but if he wishes to be saved he must tel theze to stand aside, and shut hiz eyes and open hiz mouth and swallow them, like a good soldyer ov Kriste." My frend, I hav had to praktis this "swallowing" biznes for meny yeers, and if I had not I feer I wood be az much of an unbeleever to-day az yu ar. It haz ben my salvashun, and iz whot I think wil take me into heven. By a konstant praktis ov it I hav got so that I kan swallow the biggest and nastiest kind of doses, and I wish yu waz more that wa. Why kan't yu do az we do out heer—shut yure eyes, open yure mouth, and le' it go down at wun gulp? If yu kood only do that, yu wood be az good a Kristyan az Elder Goodly, Sister Jones, or myself. In that kase yu wood not be so trubled about what yu "don't beleev," and Bruther Kumstok wood not trubble yu. Yu kood beleev anything and swallow anything. The worst ov it is with yure "What I Don't Beleev," I am afrade it will hurt the fathe ov thoze hoo hav not yet got the swaMowing fakulty to perfekshun, and to hoom the jalap yet tastes nasty and bitter. I wish yu wood hold on for a while with yure hot shot un'il tha hav bekum a littel more perfekt in the art

ov swallowing. I'm afrade so meny "What I Don't Beleev's" will choke them up so tha kan't swallow. Listen to me in this matter, and I wil kontinu to pra for yu that yu ma be abel to eskape from all yure enemys. Piusly yures, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XVIII.

HOME AFFLICTIONS.

ZION HIL, N. J., Dec. 23, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: I hope that our Kristyan frends at Watkins did not sukseed in sending yu to prizon and that yu hav got back to yure old plase agen, I think I kan realize how hard and krueel it wood be to send a man ov yure aje to prizon—taking him away from hiz family and hiz bizness for such a triveal offense. I think it wood be a disgrase to the state ov New York and to our fre institushuns, so kalld. For wun, I no I wood feel like hanging my hed in shame that our relijun and our sense ov justis waz no better than to persekute and punish an old man like yu bekauz yu don't think just az uthur peepel do or az the Church kommands. But, az I sed, I hope yu are back home agen and that the Watkins peepel will be kontent to let yu remane thare.

I beleev yu hav a terribel enemy in that man Komstok, hoo seems to follow yu up with the vindikativnes ov a demon. I kannot understand how such men az ex-Governor Woodford and Juj Benedikt kan lend themselvs to sekond the vile

efforts ov such a man. And what hurts me more than all the rest iz to hav the konvikshun forced upon me that the grate and grand Government ov the United States iz employing its power and majesty to prosekute and imprizon men like yu for opinyun's sake. It seems to me the saddest thing that haz taken plase in the kourse ov my memory, and I wood be glad kood the humiliating sight hav ben spared me. I hav alwayze ben proud ov our kountry and our sistem ov government; but if it haz desended to spy out the morals ov the peepel and send old men, and yung men, and wimmin to prizon for opinyun's sake, my pride, to that extent, wil hav kauz to be humbled, and I hav good groundz to be ashamed ov the land ov my birth.

But, my frend, you must not think yu alone ar visited with afflikshuns. We here, on Zion Hil, feel just now that our harts ar ful ov trubbel. We fæl that the hand ov God iz upon us; if not in judgment, yet in severity; but we hope it may not be in such severity az to brake our harts. Our good Elder Goodly haz ben taken suddenly and severly ill. Hiz komplaint iz numonia, and he haz ben brawt extremely low with it, and it iz enuf to make us feel our dependense on our Heavenly Father, hooz kind, protecting hand iz alwaze over us. A week ago yesterday the elder did not seem at all wel. He told us from the pulpit that he waz feeling ill and that he wood not detane us with a lengthy sermon. He koffd a good deel, and he often plased hiz hand on hiz left side, showing that the good old man waz in pane. He hurried on home az soon az the servis waz over. Mrs. Goodly soakd the good man's feet in warm water and put mustard

plasters to the soles ov hiz feet and on the back ov hiz nek, az wel az on hiz left side, and put him to bed. Dr. Wright, the family fyzishun, was kalld, and he sed the old jeutleman waz going to be a very sik man. He left sum powders of ipekak, kamfor, and dover's powder, and told the wife that wun must be given evry 3 ours. The good man's pane in the side seemd to inkrees notwithstanding the efforts that had been made for hiz releef. Warm tee of pennyroyal and hart's-eeze waz given him, and toast water and appel water were plased neer the hed ov his bed. Mrs. Goodly and thare lame dawter, the only child that iz living at home, wer up and down with him the hull nite, and he waz worse in the morning than the nite before. On the second day much alarm waz felt at the Elder's kondishun. It waz deemd best for Dr. Gates to be kalld az kounseling fyzishun when it waz desided to put a big blister on the good man's side and inkrease the dover's powder, with frekwent doses ov spirits ov niter. It waz thawt the blister did giv sum temporary releef, but he relapsed into a worse state than before. The pane in hiz side and brest inkreased, and he sed it seemd like a duzen nives kutting in every direkshun, and hiz koff waz al'most incessant.

Everybody became much alarmed at the Elder's kondishun, and tha sent 14 miles for Doktor Harper, an old fyzishun ov grate experiense, to kum and see him. Doktor Harper pronounsed it a very severe kase, and wun in which thare waz a good deel ov doubt az to the final rezult. He rekomended leeches to be applyd to the Elder's side and brest. Thare wer not enuf leeches in town for the purpose,

and tha had to send to Trenton for 2 duzen. I tel yu, Mr. Editur, this kase ov sickness kauzd grate exsitement in our littel kcommunity. The sisters ov our church wer more disturbd than tha hav ben before in 10 yeers, and the brethren hav also not ben devoid ov apprehension. The older sisters felt that the good elder waz about to leev us, and that in loozing him tha wood looze thare best frend. The yung sisters felt much the same way, and 6 ov them at leest felt that tha wood mis the opportunity ov giving him a pare ov slippers for a Kristmas present, which tha hav already got worked. This makes them feel very bad, and tha want him to get wel ever so much. Tha say if the Elder shoold die, and another elder take hiz plase, that it wood be too soon to begin to make holiday prezents, and it wil be too long to wate til another yeer. The poor things! What wil tha do? It iz too bad to work so many pares ov slippers and then to hav no elder to giv them to. Perhaps it mite do to giv out a few pares to the deekens. I kood manej to take one or two pares, if tha fit wel, to sit around the house in and reed THE TRUTH SEEKER and rite letters to the same, but then I wood not want anything so fany as the yung sisters get up for the klerjymen.

It iz held to be very doubtful whether our good Elder gets wel agen or not. He iz very low, but the doktors say thare iz alwayze hope whare thare iz life. It wil, indeed, make a sad hole in our church to hav Elder Goodly taken from us, and we no not how we kood find eny wun to fil the plase he haz so akseptably filld; but if it pleezes our Heavenly Father to take the good man from hiz labors, we shal pra that he wil send us another fatheful

servant to fil hiz plase. We hav alredy dun a larj amount ov praing on the Elder's akkount. Every devout member ov the church haz prade in public and in private that the good man may be restord to helth and that hiz usefulness may be prolonged theze meny yeers.

We mist the Elder most sadly at our meeting on last Sunday. We had not ben abel to prokure the servises ov another Baptist elder to fil hiz pulpit, and we deekens and older members had to fil the vakansy the best way we kood. Yu awt to hav seen me get out the 315th him. I red it in az ministerial and solem a voice az I kood kommand, and I ges I lookd neerly az grave az the Elder duz himself. After the singing I offerd up a fervent prare, mostly in the Elder's behaf, and that the littel lams mite not be left without a sheperd, to wander astra in the krooked and devious wayz of the Evil Wun. I pored out my sole with so much unkshun that I brawt teers to the eyes ov meny in the church. I notisd that even Sister Jones had a teer glistening in eech eye when she razed her hed after the amen had ben pronounced; and I must konfes that when I saw that, all the remnants ov hardness ov hart towards her that I had unkonshusly retaned melted away and a feeling ov tender kompasshun went out from my hart to Sister Jones. I followed the prare with about 15 minutes ov solem speaking, tuching the lonely and helples kondishun ov a flok ov littel lams without a sheperd to protekt and gard them from the wolvs and wild beests ov pashun, dout, and unbeleef which tha wer alwaze liabel to. I bore, with not a littel earnestnes, upon the nesessity which we all felt for the need ov the lite from on hi

to direkt us in the rite pathway in which we shoold wauk and to indikate to us the huje roks and presipises, the slues and pitfalls, the mires and kwiksands which we must avoid. I pointed out the grate diffikulty we wood experiense in trying to find the rite rode without a leeder or good sheperd. I prazed up our good Elder Goodly for hiz fatheful labors for meny yeers in this sheepfold ov ours, and how I hoped and prayd that hiz life wood be spared stil meny yeers to gide us on to the eternal sity—the New Jerusalem abov the klouds. I felt what I sed, and I am satisfide that it waz apprehsiated by neerly all in the church, for I saw meny wiping thare eyes while I waz speaking; nor wer my own eyes dry, and my voise trembled just enuf to giv an impressiv, solem sound. I hav never tride to speak in publik when I hav ben better satisfide with myself; and several told me, after the meeting waz out, that tha did not no that I had such an impressiv manner. Tha thawt if I wood praktis more that I wood soon get so I kood preech az well az Elder Goodly. I replyd that if I even got so I kood speak az wel that I never kood bekum such a man ov goodness and exselense az our worthy pastor.

After I had spoken Deeken Kragehed spoke a few words, but the deeken haz praktised publik speaking so littel that it iz a grate effort for him to say much. My old frend Mr. Burnham spoke about 10 minits in exsellent spirit and with much solemnity. Then sister Jones spoke and she waz not at all trubled to find words to express herself. She prazed our good elder and hoped hiz life wood be spared yet theze meny years. She spoke in hi terms of hiz good kwalitys and manly virehews and exhorted all

to pra unseesingly for hiz rekovery. Sister Burelay, an amiabel woman in advansed life, made a few remarks in the same line ov thoze who had preseded her. She askd that all neel while she prayd earnestly for our beloved pastor. We did so and she prayd with grate feeling that God wood spare Elder Goodly. Sister Jones followed in much the same line and all evidently joind in the same fervent dezire. Then, after another him, "Neerer my God to thee," waz sung with unuzual fervor, our meeting waz dismissed.

Sally and I sat up with the Elder on Saturday nite and Suzan haz been over 2 nites. She iz an exsellent nurse. We are all hoping most prarefully for the Elder's rekovery, but we are hoping almost against hope. Sorrofully yours, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XIX.

MOURNFUL NEWS—THE ELDER'S DEATH.

ZION HIL, NEW JERSEY, Dec. 30, 1878.

MR. EDITUR: It iz with a hart ful ov sadnes that I kommunikate to yu the sad intellijense that our good Elder Goodly iz no more. After neer 2 weeks ov seveer suffering, during which time our hopes and feers wer struggling for the mastery, he breethed hiz last on Friday nite ov last week. I assure yu it haz made a grate brake in our church and in our kommunity, and we hav not rekoveryed ourselvs sufficiently to hardly tel where we ar or what we wil do with ourselvs.

For the last 3 dayz ov the Elder's stay with us it began to be panefully evident that he kood not remane. He grew weaker; the disease with which he suffered became unkontrolabel, and hiz life-powers seemd to be gradually giving away before it. Myself or some member ov my family waz with him more than haf the time, and we saw from day to day that he waz sinking under the grate afflikshun that waz upon him.

He sufferd intensely in hiz chest and hiz breething waz most laborius. He hardly waz abel to take a good, natural breth from the time he waz first taken; and all the medikal skil and all the pius prares that wer offerd up for him seemd to be ov no avale. I tel yu, Mr. Editur, if prare waz ever tride with earnestnes in this world it waz in the Elder's kase; and after all the fervent and persistent supplikashuns that wer poud out for hiz rekovery it wood seem that if prare haz eny effikasy in eny instanse it aut to hav in this; and I must aknowlej that my konfidence in the positiv effikasy ov prare haz ben a littel bit shaken. I hav thawt that if thare wer eny kases where the kourse ov dizeze iz turned aside or overkum by the forse ov prare and apeels to the kourt ov heven, that this waz an instanse where it aut to hav ben suksesful; for I assure yu that I hav never nown a kase where thare waz more prare employd with so littel perseptibel rezult az with Elder Goodly. We had several regular meetings for prare when the mane porshun ov the church gathered together for the expres purpus, and then thare waz an almost konstant prare going up for the good man's rekovery from neerly every person belonging to the church. But all did no good. The dizeze waz too strong to

be moved by that ajensy, and deth stepped in and klosed the sene in spite ov all that we kood do.

Medikal skil waz ekwally az inefektual az prare. Wun seemd to be ov no more use than another. The 3 doktors, or a part ov them, ware with him more than haf the time, and their direkshuns ware karred out with speshal exaktness, but it waz ov no use. Prare and fizik ware ekwally inefektiv, and all we kood do waz to bow in submishun to the dekrees ov fate and be rezined to what kood not be helped.

I waz with the Elder a good deel the last 2 or 3 days, and wunse in a while we wood be left alone, and the sik man seemd to hav sumthing he wanted to say to me, tho he spoke with much effort and only in a hoarse whisper. At wun time he sed, "O, Deeken, this iz pretty tuf. I lay here day after day and nite after nite feeling az tho a hundred daggers ware running into me. If I kood only get a few long, ful breths how glad I wood be. If Jezus sufferd haf az much when he died az I hav sufferd in the last 10 daze, I am vary sorry for him. But I kan't think hiz sufferings wer anything like what I hav had to endure. I hav kryd to him from my vary sole to come to me in my grate distres, but I hav not been konsusus that my savyur haz vizited me at all. O, Deeken, it iz all dark to me az I am about passing away. I do not feel that ashuranse and konsolashun that I dezire and which I expectd to feel in my dying moments. I don't no how it iz, but I must say it all looks dark and unsatisfactory. I hope it iz all rite, but I hav my feers. I hav tryd to do my duty the best way I new how, and that iz the gratest konsolashun I hav. But I don't meen to worry about it. If thare iz a brite heven-land

enywhere in existense, I hope to reech it soon; but if it iz not so I shall try and make the best ov it."

On another okkashun the Elder took my hand and giv it a perseptabel skweze and with a teer standing in the korner ov hiz eye he sed: "Deeken yu hav ben a good frend to me. When I hav ben in trubel and afflikshun and hav kum to yu for ade yu hav never denyd me. Yu hav ben a grate komfort and support to me and I thank yu for all yure kindness. I wish I kood levee yu sum valuabel testimonial ov my hi regard for yu, but alas! I hav not, but my luv and blessing I shall leev with yu and I hope yu wil long remember yure fallibel, but earnest frend. I hope Deeken yu wil pardon me for eny mistakes I hav kommitted. I hav not ben just rite at a times and feer I hav sumtimes not had az much charity and justis az I aut to hav exersized. If I hav ever ronged yu in eny way, I hope you wil forgiv me, for I am sorry if I ever injured yu in the slightest degree. If I am fortunate enuf to find a heven to rest in and be happy in, I hope yu wil be along after a while and find it too, and that yu and I kan asso-shiate together in a tru brotherly spirit az we hav here. Remember, I shal want yu to know whare I am. We hav been frends here, and I hope we shal be frends thare."

The Elder then gave my hand another skweeze, and I was completely broken down. The tears flowd freely, and I kood hardly kommand my voise, but when I kood speek I gave hiz hand a desided preshure and told him that I konsiderd him wun ov the best men I ever new; that my luv for him waz ov the hiest order, that he had never ronged me in

the slitest partikular, and that I shood cherish hiz memory with the very kindest feeling, and to the latest moments ov my existense. I told him also that I doutd not that when he krossd the river ov deth he wood find bands ov kind frends that wood kondukt him to the hevenly manshuns whare he wood enjoy the sosiety ov our Redeemer and all the anshent profits ov which the good book tells us, and that after a fu more years I hoped to join them and unite with him in singing the song ov hevenly prazes forever and ever. The good man gave my hand a gentel preshure and sed he hoped it mite be so, but hiz expectashuns wer not razed to a vary hi pitch.

I waz with him when he breethed hiz last, between 11 and 12 o'clock. He had sufferd much in the after part ov the day, but in the evening hiz distres seemd lessend, but he gradually sank into the arms ov the grim monark. He sed vary littel in hiz last fu ours; hiz latest words that kood be understood wer, "This iz a serious change."

I need not tel yu what a lonely feeling ov sadnes raned in the house and in the naborhood after the Elder's deseas. It seemd az tho neerly evrybody in the kommunity waz absent, and those hoo remaned lookd as tho tha had lost the last frend tha had in the world. The Elder waz grately lovd and respekted by all and everybody mournd hiz departur. He had ben an inoffensive man, and probably had not an enemy on earth. He had spoken kind words to all, yung az wel az old, and evry wun loved him. If, when I die, all hoo no me cherish for me the same affekshun and esteem that tha do for Elder Goodly I wil be very glad. If evrybody speeks az

wel ov me az tha do ov him, and if I am konizant ov it, no it, how proud it wil make me feel. But I feer it will not be so. I am too positiv and inflexible in my way, and konsekwently I make more or les enemies; and when I am gone, if they do not speak enything against me, I feer they wil hav littel to say in my favor.

It devolvd upon Deeken Kragehed and myself to make arranjments for the speaking at the Elder's funeral. We telegrafd to Elder Bartlett ov Trenton to kum and preech the funeral sermon. He replyd that he wood, and wood also bring with him Elder Sampson, hoo formerly had preechd at Bordentown, but waz at present without a charj.

The funeral waz held at the church on Sunday afternoon, and thare wer more peepel thare than I ever saw before at wun time. Meny kum 15 miles, and all Pius Hollerseemd to be on hand. The Methodists held no meeting in the afternoon on akkount ov the funeral, and I shoold think evry wun waz prezent, besides a grate meny hoo belong to no church and liv in a sirkel ov 10 miles. Even Kap-
tin Smith waz thare with hiz family. He sed he had a respekt for the old Elder, and kood not do les than to pay hiz last respekts to hiz memory.

Elder Bartlett preeched a vary impressiv sermon. He dwelt at konsiderabel length upon the Elder's hi moral karakter, the unsertainty ov life, the grate nesessity ov having an interest in Kriste, and the joys ov Paradise. He bid us all remember the good exampel which our departed frend had set us, and strive more and more earnestly to lay up treasures in heven where moth and rust doth not korrump nor theeves brake throw and steel. Elder Sampson also

spoke a few minutes on the glory ov a true Krist-
yan's life and the value ov a saving fathe in our Lord Jezus. He iz an eezy, fluent speeker and az we hav to sekure sum wun to preech to us and az eh haz now no church under his charj, it haz ben sug-
gested that we engage him. He wil preech in Zion Hil Church next Sunday that we may se how the kongregashun like him. Thare may, however, be 2 diffikulty's in the way; he may want more salary than we feel abel to pay and then he puts on too much stile for us kuntry fokes. He iz grand enuf for wun ov yure rich churches in New York. I hav herd haf a dozen sa that he never wood be the fath-
er to us that Elder Goodly haz ben. Thare are a few hoo want a man ov stile, but the grater part want a plane unassuming, but good man. I feer Elder Sampson wil never fil the bil. I se that sum ov the sisters ar konsiderably taken with him, but I feer that iz not a vary good sine. In burying Elder Goodly we konsined a good frend and a true man to the earth and I feer we wil try several before we get wun to hoom so few objekshuns kan be razed.

I waz sorry to see by yure last paper that Deeken Ira Hopkins, ov the Baptist church in Karmel, N. Y., altho 75 yeers ov aje, haz been akting badly by getting his wife's neese in a vary unfortunate kon-
dishun. I assure yu it mortifys me to reed such news about a Baptist deeken, and espeshally wun hoo haz arrivd to such advansed yeers. He eether did not hav the grase of God in hiz hart or he allowd the Evil Wun to gane the assendensy over him. It looks az tho that baring the kross ov Kriste for a long lifetime iz but littel sekurity aganst the wiles ov the devil. I truly hope yu wil never hav okka-

shun to report such a state ov things about Deeken J. Skidmore. I wood rather lay down and die than to hav such a report made ov me and hav it tru. I am sorry for Deeken Hopkins.

Enklozed I hand yu \$3.00 for THE TRUTH SEEKER for 1879. I think I will take it a yeer, tho I shal not promis to keep up my letters evry week all the yeer threw. I find it konsiderabel ov a task, and besides I feer meny ar growing tired ov me. My wife, my dawter and myself wish yu and all yure reeders a happy New Year.

I am yures in a kontrite spirit,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XX.

TRIAL PREECHER NO 1.

ZION HIL, Jan. 6, 1879.

MR. EDITUR: The first thing I want to sa iz to wish yu a happy New Yeer, and to hope that during the prezent yeer yu ma gro wizer and better than yu ever wer before. Yu and I ar now geting along to that ripe, mature age that we aut to be wize and good if we ar ever going to be. When a man gets to be 50 or 60, he haz hiz habits and karakter pretty thoroly formd, and it iz too late in the da for him to try to make a nu kreture ov himself. The old saing iz, "Never to old to lern." That ma be tru in wun sence, but so far az the formation of karakter and kondukt ar konsernd, it iz most too late in the da to ekspekt any grate reformashun, tho I hav none men

to improov after that time ov life. "Yuth is the time to serv the Lord," and it iz also the time to la the foundashuns for a good karakter to be a stand-by thru life.

I hav formed kwite a strong frendship for yu and yure paper, and I certainly wish yu both a grate deel ov sukses. Tho yu ar an Infidel, and deny much ov that fathe which iz sakred to me, I like yure onesty and kandor, and the earnestnes yu manifest, even in a bad kauz. I stil hope yu wil se the error ov yure ways, and that yu will turn from yure unbelief stil befor it iz too late. I shall keep on riting my leters to yu for a while yet, and shall kontinu to urj yu to aksept the fathe that iz in Jezus, and bekum a brite shining lite in the kauz ov truth and glory. I hope yu may do wel in 1879, and that yure frends may inkrees in numbers and strength, and yure enemies be overwhelmd with konfushun and shame. Yu shal hav my prares for yure sukses, and for yure konvershun to the truth az it iz in my Heavenly Redeemer. I hope yet to see yu in the fold of Jezus before I di.

But this is not what I sat down to rite yu about this time. I hav a few words to sa about our trial ov preecher no. 1. Elder Samson kame on akkording to agreement, and we hav lissend to hiz preeching and hiz praing, and hav also had hiz terms for a yeer to labor with us in our vinyard. He got here about noon on Frida and took dinner with us. Sally and Suzan new the elder waz koming on that da, so tha had me kil the fattest turkey we had, and the wa tha drest, and stuft, and roasted that turkey waz a kawshun to all barn-yard fous. I hav sumtimes wondered if God did not get up chickens and turkys

for the speshal benefit ov hiz holy servants, the preechers. Tha truly seem very fond ov them, and akt az tho tha had a first morgej on them, and waz about to forkloze. Tha eet them as tho tha regarded them as a speshal gift from heven, ov which the more tha had ov them the better. The wimmen fokes seem also to aknolej this klame ov the preechers on the barn-yard stok, for I hav notised for meny yeers ov my life, that whenever an elder or a preecher kums to take dinner with us, and the wimmen fokes no it in time, the chickens and turkys hav to suffer akkordingly. And I was tawking with my old frend, Deeken Duzenbury ov the Methodist church in Pius Holler; and he iz an older man than I am, and he sez he haz notised it all through hiz life that thare presiding elders and all thare preechers and exorters hav wonderful good mouths and stomaks for chikens, turkys, and duks. And he sed he had sumtimes thawt that sum ov the preechers he had nown must hav had speshal help from heven to dijest all the fousls and puddings and tarts he haz seen them put awa.

In addishun to the turky, a ful line ov vegetabels, 2 kinds ov kake, 2 kinds ov prezervs, wife and Suzan got up sum splendid minse pi made after a new reseat Suzan red in sum lady's magazeen, and I must say it waz kapital. I waz really afrade the good Elder wood founder himself, for he ate very hartily. He sed the ride from Trenton had given him a splendid appetite. I notised wun remark he made toward the kloze ov the meel, and that waz shood the Lord se fit to kall him to this porshun ov hiz vinyard to dres and kultivate it, he wood be glad to bekum a member ov our family, for he felt

that the Lord waz with us and that we wer under hiz immediate blessing. Suzan laft about it afterwards and sed she gessed if Elder Samson had dined with us -um washing da, when we had nothing but a pikd up dinner, he wood think the Lord had left us and gone somewhere on a visit.

I gess if the truth waz none, the Elder rather overdid the eeting bizness on that da, for at first he waz very sleepy, and sed he had eeten so harty that it had made him drowzy, and then he seemd to be in distress, and he wauked the floor for an our, and then he sed he beleevd he wood take a wauk in the open air, and he waz gone neer 2 ours. I waz afrade he had foundered himself, but mebbe the exersize savd him. At nite he waz in a fare kondishun for te, and at the evening prare-meeting he waz in eksellent trim.

It waz agreed on that I shood leed off first in addressing the throne of grase, and I poured out my supplekashuns with all the enerjy ov sole that I kood kommand. I made a speshal rekwest ov the Almity for him to rezerv his choisest blessing for hiz children on Zion Hil after he had so resently chastizd them so severely, and I askd him to draw us neer unto himself and to proov to us by hiz speshal kare that he waz indeed our heavenly father, and that he did take better kare ov us than he did ov the children ov sin. I askt God to speshally ade us in selekting a shepherd to watch over us and protekt us from the wolvs that rome round about us. I told him how liabel we all were to go astray unles we had a watchful shepherd to gard us and leed us evry da ov our lives. I waz so earnest in my appeal that Suzan sed to me after meeting, when we had

returnd home, and she met me in the hall, in a sly sort ov wa, that she did not see how God, if he had eny kondesenshun at all, kood stand out aganst such an earnest and butiful request az I made. She sed I pled my kase like a lawyer before a jury, and she thawt God must bring in a verdikt to sute me.

But Elder Samson made a far more beautiful and polishd prare than I did. He began by prazing God for all hiz grand works in making the world, the sun, moon, and stars; setting them all in their plases and putting them in moshun; establishing the sezons; giving fertility to the soil that it mite produse and bring forth abundantly all the good things devized by heaven. He told God also about the intelligense he had given man—kwalifying him to juj good and evil, to aksept ov wun and rejekt the other. He kalld God's attenshun to the sore afflikshun he had brawt upon hiz chozen church ov Zion Iil; how he had made thare harts sad and kauzd them to wade in the deep waters ov sorro. He askd God not to forget all this, and now, az a rekompense and to show hiz goodnes and mersy, az well az his severity, to bless them with a fatheful worker in the kauze ov Kriste—wun hoo wood amply fil the plase made vakant by the departure ov the lovd sheperd ov this flok. He went on in this way for 15 minits, and wound up in the most approvd stile. That prare made a good impreshun on the brethren and sisters prezent whether it had eny effekt on God or not. Four or five more made prares, when we sang the "Sweet By and By" and departed for home, the Elder akkompanying us ov kourse. We did not sit up late. The Elder admitted that the fateegs and exersises ov the day had

made him weery and he wood retire. In the morning he eet pretty harty ov the splendid bukwheel kakes which Suzan nose so well how to get up, but hiz appetite waz not so good az it waz the day before.

About 10 o'klok I took him over in my spring wagon to Deeken Kragehed's, where he stayd til the next day. In the evening he returnd to our house, and sed he preferd it here, and so he remaned with us til this morning, when he left for Trenton. I wil not detane yu long in teling yu about hiz sermon on yesterday, only that it waz very good and seems to hav givn jeneral satisfakshun. His text waz, "Be ye perfekt, even az yure father in heven iz perfekt;" and he had much to say about the grate importanse of Kristyans living pure lives and shunning all the evil wayz ov the devil. He extold the buties ov a spotles life and ov alwayz being filld with the grase ov God and the luv ov hiz Son. He sed, ov kourse, we are all sinners, and thare iz no day ov our lives that we do not kommit sin; but if we possess a sanktified spirit and hav the fathe that saves us—beleeving at all times in the merits ov the life and deth ov the Lord Jezus—it matters not so much what our kondukt iz; that even the little sins we kommit will not be kountd against us az they are against the vile sinners hoo sin openly and willingly. He repeated what I hav herd before—that the grate differense between a sinner's sinning and a Kristyan's sinning waz that "the sinner sins willingly and ov choise, but that a Kristyan sins with the most grashus reluktanse." And for this rezon he doubted not that the sins ov sinners waz much blaker in the site ov God than the sins ov Krist-

yans. He sed the time wood kum when the saints hoo hav really tasted the body and blood ov the Son ov God wood bekum so sanktifyd and purifyd that tha wood kommit no sin, and that everything tha sed and did wood be perfekt az the angels in heven. He urjd us all to press on to this state in our travel and to seek earnestly for sanktifikashun, which iz redemshun.

Hiz sermon waz ritten out and he did not preech off hand az Elder Goodly uzed to, and for this reezon hiz sermon did not seem so fresh and so direktly from the hart. Az a general thing our fokes like off-hand sermons best; tho thare ar a few that insist that the sermons ar better when they ar ritten out and that it iz also the stile now, and this klas likes Elder Samson bekause he reeds hiz sermons.

It waz kommunion day with us and the Elder administered the sakrament and blessed it with akomplished unkshun. Deeken Kragehed and I served the bred and wine to the elekt with all the dignity and solemnity ov which yu kan imagine. Ov kourse none wer allowd to partake save thoze hoo ar members ov the Baptist Church. A Presbyterian waz there but he ov kourse wuz not allowd to partake. This seems rong to sum, but we Baptists insist that it iz rite. I wish Mr. Editor, that yu waz a good Baptist, so yu kood kum out on kommunion days and partake with us ov the sanktifyd bred and wine, which we regard az the symbols ov the body and blood ov Kriste. Will it ever be so? Let us hope.

Az to Elder Samson's stile ov preeching, sum like him wel and sum do not. I notis the wimmen fokes like him prettey wel and ar in favor ov his being

hired for a year. Others say, "Hold on, let us look further, we may find a man that wil sute us kwrite az wel and for less muneey. And the prise, by the by, iz the grate objekshun to Elder Samson. He holds himself pretty hi and asks \$1,500 a year. That iz more than we ever payd here, and it iz more than we feel abel to pay. We only gave Elder Goodly \$900 a yeer and he waz wel satisfyd with that. Elder Samson iz too expensiv for us; we wil hav to look further. I shal rite to Elder Sparkel hoo haz just finishd hiz yeer at Beverly. He iz wating for a kall and we wil perhaps try him next Sunday. I told Elder Samson this morning when I took him to the depo that we wood let him no by the end ov this munth if we konklude we want him. He said he wood very willingly work in this part ov God's vineyard for wun yeer. Truly your frend,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XXI.

TRIAL PREACHER NUMBER TWO.

ZION HIL, Jan. 13, 1879.

MR. EDITUR: I must tel yu that we hav had our sekond trial preacher heer, and he haz vizited for 3 days. Elder Sparkel kame on last Thurzday forenoon, and az I had ritten to him, he kame rite heer. He sed that, az he had leezure on hiz hands, he thawt he wood spend a few days with us, and see how the plase and the peepel suted him. He sed he waz willing to do the Lord's work wharever he waz kalld, but still he rather preferd a plezant lokalitay

and an intelligent and kultured klass ov peepel. He thawt he kood do the Lord better servis where the kondishuns and surroundings wer all that wun kood dezire. He sed he hoped the Lord would alwaze leed hiz feet in plezant plases, and giv him kompan-yuns and helpers that wud be konjenial to him. So far, he sed, God had ben very good to him, and had kalled him to labor in plezant parts ov hiz moral vinyard. The last 3 years he had toiled in Beverly, on the Delaware river, 15 miles abuv Filadelfy. Thare he had found a kulcherd klass of peepel and a very desirable state ov sosiety. The heds ov meny ov the familys wer biznes men of Filadelfy, going to thare biznez and returning evry nite and morning. In the summer time the town waz ga and lively, and large numbers from the sity spent the summer at that plezant vilej; but in the winter it waz a little dul, az the larger porshun ov the welthy familys returnd to the sity, and thus deprivd him ov the sosiety ov many ladies and jentlemen, or rather sisters and brothers, hoom he prized very hily.

I kood se that hiz kountenans fel a little when he saw how sort ov unpretending Zion Hil iz and how plane and kuntrifide its peepel ar. I kood se that he waz saing to himself: "This is not Beverly by a darn site." He iz quite a brilyant and affable man, just about 40 yeers ov aje, and az glib and polished az a French dansing master. He iz kut out to get along eezy threw the world, and for evry wun to bow down to and do omaje to. He sed he had ben preaching for neerly twenty yeers, and he had alwaze ben forchunate in getting good plases, in finding good, respektable people, and in making hosts ov warm frends. I'll bet yu anything rezon-

able that he haz a fare appresiashun ov the female perswashun, for he chins with them and runs on with bis nise tawk in a wa that iz ekseedingly agreeabel to them az a rule. He soon got ackwainted with Suzan, and run on with his konversashun with her az tho he had nown her for a dozen yeers. He askt her about her bo, how long she had been keeping kumpany with Sam, when she waz going to be mar-rid, whether she wud remane in Zion Hil after her maraje, and what her husband wud follo for a living. Suzan sez he iz an agreeabel sort ov man, but that he asks altogetther too meny kwestyuns for a stranjer. He is wun that wil not be a stranjer very long. Even the children where he kalls hav to kum up to him, and tel him all tha no and what tha expekt to no. He is wun hoo wil alwaze stand wel with the wimin and chidren, and that iz haf the battle in this world.

The wimin fokes got him up a good dinner the da he kame. We had a chicken pot pi and minse pi. He prazed the dinner very much, and that made Sally and Suzan feel kwite komfortabel and good nacherd. He sed he had notist that in familys whare tha had good dinners and livd wel, whare the wimin wer good kooks, thare waz more happiness and real enjoyment than whare the dinners wer haf-kooked or defishent in stile or kwantity. I thawt he waz about rite in that. Good kooking haz a good deal to do in making familys happy.

The Elder duz not appeer to be over pius, tho I prezume he haz piety enuf for all praktikal purposes. He kan tawk fluently upon all subjekts, and it iz kwite eezy for him to dilate on all the good things Jezus haz dun for us. The jist ov hiz relijun, how

ever, iz to moov in good sosiety, be in good sirkumstances, and to keep up good appeerances. Humility is not very essenshal in the konstruksun ov hiz grade ov Kristyans. I kan se he duz not go very much on being glum and sorrowful. He thinks evry man aut to konsider himself just az good az hiz naber, and that all shoold hold up thare heds like men, and not keep thare nozes in the dust. I rather liked hiz vews upon that subjekt az wel az on a good meny others. He iz kwite a man ov the world. He thinks a good deel more about this world than the wun he haz not seen, and he beleevs in making the best ov it under all sirkumstances.

He asks a blessing before meels with the same kind ov ability he shows in all hiz konversashun. Hiz prares are also ov the same karakter. He seems to be telling the unseen Father evrything that iz going on in this world ov ours just as unkonsernd az tho God had been absnt on a long jurney and had just got bak, and wanted to heer the news. The Elder's advise iz also just az free az hiz news. He givs hiz opinyan to God just az freely as he duz to any other person. He makes such long prares, too, that Suzan thawt he never wood stop. But az hiz praying iz dun up in such a plezant manner, I shoold think God wood rather like him for a korrespondent or kommunikator. If God pays any attenshun to what the Elder sez, I'll bet he iz haf amuzed and wonders how the man kood find out so much.

The Elder stayd with us the afternoon and nite, and he kept his tung going all the time when he waz not asleep; and he tells a good meny things that ar interesting. He wood be a grate akkwishun in a naberhood that took no nuzepaper. He reeds about

all the papers going, and iz wel posted in evrything. I had to laf in my sleeve when I saw him pik up a kopy ov THE TRUTH SEEKER. He lookd over it here and thare, and red a paragraf or 2 in different plases, and he sed, "Wel, wel, what kind ov a paper iz this for a Baptist deeken to take? Why, it's an Infidel paper! Deeken Skidmore, do yu take this paper?" I told him I had ben taking it awhile, and tho I kood not subskribe to meny ov its doktrins, I liked to reed it and see what kan be sed on both sides. "Why," sed he, "I ges that iz about rite. I am wun hoo thinks it won't hurt me to reed almost enything, and whatever interests me I am fond of reeding." Just at that time Sally kum into the room, and when she saw THE TRUTH SEEKER in hiz hand, and she wawked up to him and took it away from him. "O," sed she, "yu shoold not take such a paper az that into your hands. It iz a wiked konsern that the Deeken haz ben taking for awhile, and it trys my pashunse terribly. Let me take it away." At this she took it out ov hiz hands and hid it behind a chest in our bed-room. The Elder replyd to her, with a smile, "O, Sister Skidmore, yu need hav no feers, that paper wood do me no harm, nor wil it harm the Deeken. We hav arrived to that aje that we kan reed enything almost without injury. For my part, I like wel enuf to reed the arguments ov our enemys and see what thay kan say aganst our holy relijun. Don't induije in feers, Sister Skidmore. A child ov God kan reed anything an Infidel kan rite, and it wil not do me any harm. Our work iz for a lifetime, and we shoold be abel to withstand all the arguments that unbelievers kan bring up aganst us. Why, sister, I shoold think far less ov

our relijun and our Savyor if I thawt tha wer kapabel ov being injured by all that unbeleev-ers and skeptiks kan sa agenst them. At all events we aut to appear to be willing to let them sa all tha kan. In no wa wil we show more weeknes and lak ov fathe in our own relijun and in our own klames than in being afrade that thoze hoo do not agre with us wil, by argument, tawk, riting, or printing, be abel to overthrow them. If we even feel a dout now and then az to the orijinality and divinity ov our system, we must not sho it to the enemy, nor must we appeer even to be afrade ov all tha kan sa on the opposite side. I must admit that I hav red sum very powerful arguments aganst the divinity, Kristyanity, and the authentisity ov the Skriptures, and had I not ben wel founded in the life work which I hav undertaken, and saw in it not only my duty but my meens ov a livelihood and obtaning respekt from my fello-men, I shoold neerly hav ben upset. I hav red Greg's 'Kreed ov Kristendom,' 'Draper's Intellektual Development,' and hiz 'Konflikt between Relijun and Siense,' Bukel's 'History ov Sivilizashun,' and even Paine's 'Aje ov Reezon,' and I must sa tha kome neer upsetting my fathe, and I wil konfes to yu that had it not ben for my purpus in life, the work I had taken in hand, and the avokashun I had chozen to pursu, I feer tha wood hav made an unbeleever ov me. But I sed to myself, These works wil not put a doller in my poket. I kan make a good living by preeching Jezus and be respektet by my kongregashun and by all hoo no me, and I kan leed an eezzy and plezant life. But if I espouz Infidelity, my meens ov making a living ar gone and I wil be lookd on az a rene-

gade, and I wil be despized and lookd down upon for the balanse ov my life. That waz what settled me. If I waz dispozd to admit the forse ov the Infidel arguments, I saw at wunse that tha wood not pa; tha wood not bring me affluense and oner; tha wood bring me penury and disgrase. I kan see tha hav reezon on thare side, but that must not be my gide; I must not follo it. No; I will preech Jezus and him krusifyd and evrything that iz oppozed tc them I wil put out ov my mind. That, my frends, iz the wa I settled the bizness. I kood eezily hav ben an unbeleever, but I wood not allow myself to be wun. I lookd the feeld over karefully for meny weeks trying to settel my mind az to what kourse I wood take, and at last I decided to adhere to the kross, and I hope I ma never be sorry."

Thus, Mr. Editur, the Elder went on and wife and I thawt he waz telling rather more than he needed to. We kood se plane enuf that the man had ful az much fathe in Infidelity az he had in Kristyanity and if it wood hav brawt him az good pay and az eezzy a life and az much respekt that he wood hav been apt to hav chozen the former. I had to smile a littel to myself and I also sed to myself, "Wei, Elder yu ar pretty sharp, yu no which side ov yure bred iz butterd." I kood se that wife did not think so much ov the Elder after that konversashun. And after he had gone she said: "I don't kwite like Elder Sparkel. I should think he waz just about az much ov an Infidel az a Kristyan and he wood preech the wun that payd the best," I replyd by saying, "O Sally, that iz the wa with a good meny ov them. It iz a matter ov dollers and sents with them. A grate meny wil preech that which pays

the best." "O," said Sally, "I hate to think so; kan it be that there ar such kind ov shepherds to leed and gard our littel floks." "Yes, Sally, its a fact," I sed.

But, Mr. Editur, I am making too long a story ov this letter and I must just sa in brief that next mornning Elder Sparkel kalld on the other leedingchurch members and tawkd and prayd and eet with them. He did not kum bak to our hous eny more and Sally sed she waz glad ov it and for her part she wished Elder Goodly had never taken the numonia and died. She wood rather hav him than all the Sparkels that kood be skart up.

Elder Sparkel gave us a vary good sermon on Sunday, and showd a good deel ov ability az a speeker. He took hiz text from Paul, Romans iii, 28, "Therefore we konklude a man iz justifyd by fathe without the deeds ov the law." He extolld fathe to the skys, and sed it waz the grate salvashun ov the world, and kompard with it works wer ov no akkount. He sed the 2 grate faktors in the Kristyan sitem were the blood ov Kriste and fathe in hiz name. With theze all the world kan be savd, and without not a sole kan eskape the fires ov hel. In this wun sentense and proposishun yu hav in a nutshel his entire sermon. I don't beleev, Mr. Editur, yu wood agree with what he sed, for I hardly kood myself, and wife sed after we got home that she did not think the Elder beleevd it himself. Suzan went further, and sed outrite that Sparkel waz a sparkling hipokrit. So yu se he did not kwrite sute the Skidmore family, and tha all voted not to hire him for a yeer, espeshally on Monday morning, when he told Deeken Kragehed and my-

self that hiz prise for a yeer was 2 thousand dollers. I tell yu it made us open our eyes. We told him we kood never think ov paing such a prise az that. He said he wood take not a dollar les, and that if preeching the gospel did not pa him so he kood support hiz family in desent stile that he wood throw it up and look to something else for a livlihood. We suggested that the dezire to save soles from the fires ov hel aut to prompt him to work at a komparativ low prise, "O," said he, "unless I kan get desent pay for my servises soles must look out for themselves. If tha are not willing to pay to be kept out ov hel tha ma go thare and burn for all I kare. I wil not work to keep them out unles I am payd wel for it. If God in his all-wize purpozez wants to dam hiz kreetures I shall not interpoze my efforts unless a reezonabel konsiderashun iz prezented me. If men an wimmen had rather go to hel than pay me to keeo them cat it iz not my fault."

Deeken Kragehed and I thawt that rather kweer tawk, and we soon made up our minds that hiz servises wood not be needed on Zion Hil, and giv him to understand az much. After giving him 25 dollers for hiz vizit and sermon, we bid him good-by; and if we never see Elder Sparkel agane probably we shall not grieve sorely.

I am truly yure frend, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

P. S.—When I had got this letter a littel more than haf ritten, I waz suddenly kalld away on urjent bizness in an adjoining kounty and waz absent 3 days. When I got bak I thawt it too late to send

my letter off for yure last week's paper, so I let it lay over til this week.

I see by yure last number that yu ar really to be tryd in the United States kourt for that "Kupid's Yokes" bizness. It is indeed a most pitiful affare for our Government to engage in, and I am hartily ushamed ov it. I hope yu wil kum off viktorius, and so duz Suzan. She sends her luv. J. S.

LETTER NO. XXII.

MORE TRIALS.

ZION HILL, N. J., Jan. 27, 1879.

MR. EDITUR: It bekums my duty to inform yu that we hav had 2 more trial preechers here to tawk to us and to proov to us what ability tha pozesd to leed us Zion Hilers akseptably on to the heavenly kingdum abuv; and, between yu and me, I must konfess to yu that we ar getting a littel tired ov the amuzement. We hope before long to be abel to settel down under a regular leeder hoom we kan rely on and hoo wil be abel to brake for us the bred ov life, and pore out for us the waters ov salvashun. We begin to think we shal not find a sheperd to watch over us and leed us arite, one hoom we kan luv and konfide in az we did good Elder Goodly. There are undoubtedly smarter men, more brilyant men, and all that sort of thing, but when yu take him all in all, I feer it wil be a long time before we shal look upon hiz like agen.

Our 3d kandidate waz Elder Simpkins, hoo kum on heer with hiz kid gluv, polishd boots, fine brod-

kloth kote, and all the'smirks and smiles that yu kan imajin. He iz only 28 yeers old, and haz ben a regular elder but 3 yeers; and I shal hav to admit that I kood hardly bring my mind to be kontent to sit under the sound ov his vois, and take what he noes and what he sez for the truths ov heven. I fansy that my nolej about this world, and the other too, iz ekwal to his, and I am afrade that he kood not teech me very much unles it iz how to be a dandy and make a fine sho among the wimmin fokes. I ges he noes more about that sort ov thing than I hav ever lerned, tho I hav ben kalld a lady's man myself.

Wel, the yung elder kame rite to our hous first, just az all the rest ov them do; bekaus from my ability to rite letters it is turnd over to me to do the correspondence with them. He kum on Friday noon, in time to take dinner with us, and having just killed a fine fat steer, we had a plenty ov beef. That day wife and Suzan got up a splendid roast, and the yung elder seemd to enjoy it very much after hiz ride ov 75 miles on the kars. I notisd he was pretty particular to hav it rare. But I ges it suited him pretty wel, for he was abel to dispoze ov the sekond larj plateful. He iz a regular littel dandy, and wife thawt he waz the politest minister she had ever seen, and I kood see he made a speshal effort to be agreeabel to the wimmin fokes. Suzan sed she kood not help sort o' liking the feller, tho she thawt him a littel shaller and soft. When he askt the blessing he was very flippant, and when he prade he was too fansy and polite in hiz langwij, too poetical and flowery. It did not seem to me that hiz prares went much hier than the seeling over hed, and tha ap-

peered to be addrest more to thozе in the room than to our heavenly father abuv the clouds.

He stade with us till Saturday afternoon, when I took him over to Deeken Kraghed's, but he told me Munday morning that he preferd our house. He liked the wa our wimmen folks do up things, and he waz vary fond ov tawking with Suzan. He liked her redy wit and kwick way ov ansuring. It made me laf in my sleev to heer Suzan go on with him. She put a grate meny kwestyuns to him to draw him out and see how much he noes. She waz a littel rogish about it, and she got him so worked up by the kwestyans she put to him that he seemd rather bewilderd. She found hiz reeding had not been vary extensiv, exsept theolojikal works and novels, which she took not vary much interest in. She found he had red vary few sientifik works, az Darwin's and Huxley's, and all thozе lernd men, but sed he had konfind himself to such works az the church aprovs. He sed he had rather be ignorant than to akwire any nolej that the church kood not bless.

He finally got pretty konfidenshal with Suzan and told her he waz not marred yet but waz looking for a kompanyun for life. He admitted that he waz parshally engaged to a yung lady in the southern part ov the state, the dawter ov a welthy farmer. The yung lady thawt a good deel ov him but the father waz rather opposed to her marrying the Elder. He did not wish to see her marry a klergyman, preferring a farmer, a merchant, or even a good respektabl mekanik. The Elder iz afrade the father wil perswade the dawter to giv him up. In the konversashun he asked Suzan in kase he shoold lokate at Zion Hill, whether he kood hope to be ak-

septed by her as a suitor and whether he mite not indulje a hope for future happiness with her. She very karefully gave him to understand that he must entertane no hopes in that direkshun; that previous engagements wood preklude everything ov that kind, and rather advised him to keep hiz eyes upon the south. He sed he was sorry to heer such news az that, for should he lokate here he wood be only too glad to kultivate her akkwaintance with a view ov fucher possibilitys, and he thawt that kood he win in her eyes he kood easily giv up his southern prospekts and hopes. He told me afterwards that he thawt Suzan waz about the most sensible girl he had met in a yeer and I konsidered that about the best thing he sed while he was with us.

His sermon on Sunday waz just tolerabel. I hav herd better and I hav herd worse. He red from manuskript and did so in a rather strate, monotonous stile that did not impart much animashun.

His subject waz the "Glorys of Heaven," from the text, "In my Father's hous ar meny manshuns." He made it out that heven waz a plase ov wonderful happiness, which konsisted in standing around the throne ov God, bowing eternally, and singing prazes to hiz name. He did not exactly say that the joys ov the saints wood be inkreased by the agonys ov the damd in hel, but he sed that while the redeemed wer prazing God around hiz hevenly throne, the lost soles ov perdition wood be suffering the exkrushiating torchures of the damd, which must kontinue for ever and ever. He drew a vivid pikchure ov the 2 kondishuns, and urjd hiz hearers to sekure admishun into the New Jerusalem, where the joys ov the blest wood never seese.

The impreshun he made upon the members ov the church waz only tolerably fare. He waz not set down az a profound man, and several told me he waz a lite wate, and tha hoped we wood not hire him. The yung man wood hav ben very glad to kum and preech to us a yeer for \$900. We told him we doubted not hiz intenshuns wer all that kood be expekted, but that it wood probably be best for us look a littel farther, and that probably a man a littel older than he wood sute the majority better. He seemd sorry that we did not see fit to engage him, and sed he thawt he kood pleez us if we wood giv him a chance. We told him if after looking further we kood not sute ourselves better we wood rite him.

Our next man was old Elder Duzenberry, hoo used to preech in the eastern part of Pennsylvania. He iz kwite a kontrast to yung Elder Simpkins, being 66 yeers ov aje, and az ruff as the younger man iz smooth and polished. He iz what yu ma kall wun ov yur ruf hewers, and tho he may not be exaktly what iz kalld a hard-shel Baptist, he kums pretty neer it. He iz a regular old-fashiond, loud-voiced, earnest preecher. He prays loud, and tawks loud, and beleevs in waking up sinners and bringing them to jujment in dubbel-kwik time. He wood make a first-klas Gabriel; I am shure he kood blo the trumpet so loud that the last sleeper wood raze on end and ask what iz the matter.

There is no going to sleep while he preeches, and I haf think that iz the reezon my frend, Deeken Kragehed, is not in favor ov engaging him. He sez the old man preeches in so loud a voice that it makes hiz hed ake. But the Deeken likes to take hiz littel nap in sermon time and don't want to be deprivd ov that

luxury. And he haz such a kwiet way ov sleeping that he disturbs nobody. He duz not keep up a nodding az tho he wood jerk hiz hed off, nor duz he snore so az to disturb the worshipers in their devoshuns, but he shuts hiz eyes, sits up strate, and passes off into a sweet sleep az kwietly az a littel baby. Now thares Brother Philbrick, he goes to sleep almost evry Sunday, and hiz hed keeps bobbing up and down like it went by mashenery, and onse in a while he givs a snort that almost puts the speeker out and wakes up evrybody in the house. And thare's Sister Jones; she iz pretty fleshy, and she haz so much to do and say threw the week that on Sunday she needs rest, and wunse in a while the flesh gets the viktory over the spirit, and she drops asleep before she noes it, and yu aut to heer wun ov her snorts. They starel the hull house, and the way her dawter shakes her to wake her up iz a kawshun. Thare wood be no trubble ov this kind, however, if we hav Elder Duzenberry to do our preeching; thare wood be no nodding and no snorting, and if the shingles stade on the roof it wood be lucky. He don't uze eny manuskript or notes, but haz it all in hiz hart and kan tawk it rite out without the leest trubbel, but, az I sed, it iz ruff and vehement. He don't palaver over the sinner worth a sent, but strikes rite out from the shoulder. He sez to them, "Yu wil and yu won't; yu shal and yu shant; yu'l be damd if yu do, and be damd if yu don't."

The Elder mixes a good deel ov damnashun with hiz sermons, enyway, and sulfer iz a kommodity that he makes grate uze ov in hiz bizness. Hiz sermon yesterday waz on the last jujment, and I tel yu ne made a hot, lurid time ov it. We kood almost heer

Gabriel's horn sounding among the tooms ; we kood almost se the graves opening and the skared sleepers rubbing thare eyes to try to se what the fuss waz all about, and we kood almost heer them kalling for the roks and the mountains to fall upon them to hide them from the rath ov a mersiful God. He stird up the very fires ov hel, threw in fresh brimstone, and let on the draft. The flames lept up and likd the vaulted roof, while the grones and shreeks ov the retched damd ones reverberated from wall to wall. Oh ! he did piktur the fate ov the poor sinner in such a horrid lite that it waz most paneful to kon-temple ; and I never had the doktrin ov hel-fire and damdashun seem so horribel to me before ; and I wil say to yu that I don't beleev it any longer, and I hav got to think that if Kristianity can't be kept up only by preeching such stuff az that, it had better go by the bord. I do not beleev that any good being ever devized such a plase, but that the hul mizerabel idea waz devized by preests hundreds ov yeers ago to friten poor simple soles into thare power and make them shel out thare muny freely to keep out of that horribel plase.

The fakt is, the old Elder rather overdid the thing and piled on the agony too strong. It shokd the feelings ov several hoo herd him, and made meny feel very unplezant. Truth kompels me to say the Elder did not make a firstrate impression—too much sulfur, too much noize and fury, to sute our refined tastes. Elder Duzenberry wil not do for us. He may sute the bakwoods porshuns ov the kuntry, but not Zion Hil. Although he offered to labor with us for wun thouzand dollars a yeer, we will hav to look further and se what forchune hez in store for

us. Our next man iz to be Elder Sniggles from Hakensack, and we ar grately in hopes we shal like him. He is sed to be a very saintly old man, kareful ov the feelings ov hiz flok, and agenst hoom for 20 yeers the breth ov supishun haz not ben razed. I wil tel yu something about him in my next.

By-the-bye, Mr. Editur, that last number of yures iz a red-hot wun. How yu did pitch into Rev. Jo Cook and the klergy generally! Why, it made me blush klear up behind my eers to reed such awful krimes in konnekshun with ministers. Hoo wood beleev tha will do such naughty things? I suppose it iz so. I am afrade they are not much better after all than the men hoo pa them to tel them how to liv piously and purely in this world. Suzan sez it iz the most terrible chapter she haz ever red and she thinks the Rev. Jo Cook had better rezerve such epithets az leper, ghoul, and ogre for his own klerikal brethren. But draw it mild, Mr. Editur, or I am afrade yure enemys wil send yu to prizon on general prinsiples, whether the jury find Kupid a bad fellow or not. But whatever yure fate may be yu wil kontinue to hav the prares and simpaty ov Suzan and her father, but go karefully.

Your pius friend, JOEL SKIDMORE.
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XXIII.

ELDER SNIGGLES.

ZION HILL, N. J., Feb. 3, 1879.

MR. EDITOR : I think we begin to se dalite. For several weeks we hav ben trying to find an elder to take the place of Elder Goodly, hoom the Lord took so suddenly from us. We tryd, az yu no, a number ov different preachers, but tho tha mite be wel kalkulated for sum churches, tha did not seem kwite fitted to our kase. But now we think we hav found the man that wil fil the bil and wil akseptably brake the bred ov life for us and pore out for us the waters ov salvashun. Elder Sniggles, from Hakensak, haz ben heer and preched a sermon that all liked and which seemd to enthuse us all with the tru gospel spirit. We like hiz akshuns, hiz manner ov tawking to both brethren and sisters, and hiz stile ov publik delivery. He seems to no how to adapt himself to all ajes and classes, and karrys about with him a Kristly spirit which kan be redily perseevd by even an ordinary worldly person. And best ov all, we like him bekauz he places hiz servises at such figgers az kum within our ability to reech. We ar not a rich kongregashun, and kannot employ fansy, hi-prised preachers. But what we agre to pa we intend to pa promptly, and ar on prinsipel oppozed to paying, even for a good thing, more than it iz worth.

Elder Sniggles arrived at our hous last Friday nite, and I must sa kondukted himself in a very proper manner. He waz affabel and plezant with the wimmen folks, but seemd to not make any

speshal effort to win thare admirashun. He tawked to them much az he did to the men fokes, and treeted all with respekt and konsiderashun. He duz not seem to think so much ov hiz belly as sum do, and eets in a moderate and gentlemanly manner. In konversashun he iz free and eazy, but duz not wish to do all the tawking himself. He kan listen to others the same az he wishes to be listened to when he speeks. He iz what may be kalld a wel behaved man in private az well az in publik, and that iz more than kan be sed ov sum ov the preachers I hav nown.

In our Friday nite prare meeting he akkwitted himself wel. He address the throne ov grase az wun not afrade to make hiz wants nown, and yet not with too much boldness and self-importanse. He did not assume to tel God a lot ov things ov which he mite be supposed to be ignorant ; nor did he lay down a line ov polisy which he thawt God aut to pursue, and that he waz just the man that kood inform him how to do it. Hiz stile waz az wun hoo really wanted the blessings ov heven to speshally rest on this kommunity, and wanted ade sent from on hi to make all men good and happy. He askt it az a favor, and not by way of kommanding ; and it seemd so rezonabel that the powers of heven should uze a small part only ov thare forse and ability in making this world virchuos and happy, and I waz led to wonder why tha did not do it. The kwestyuns that at onse arize are, if God iz so abel in the multitude ov hiz power to inkline the harts ov men to pursu the rite korse to win happines, prosperity, and helth, why in the world don't he do it ? If he noes so wel what poor, ignorant, fallibel man wants,

with all the power he kan uze, why don't he spend a littel ov it in indusing poor mortals to take the rode that leads to komfort, peeese, and enjoyment? Why duz he, yeer after yeer, and sentury after sentury, allow poor, short-sighted mortals to konstantly take the rode which not only leads to trubbel and unhappines in this life, but to endles mizery and retchednes threw the endles ajes ov eternity, when, with an effort no more for him than for me to turn my hand, he kood kauz evry one to take the rode to goodnes and happines? I hav so many times thawt that if I waz the Supreme Being, it woud giv me plezure to make evrybody virchuuous and happy by simply inklining thare harts to pursu the right korse and to perform the rite deeds.

But I am digressing. I shoold be telling yu more about Elder Sniggles. The prare meeting went off wel, and he konvinsed us that he iz wun we kan work with plezantly and harmoniusly. He iz not a deep man, nor wun ov profound nolej; but he haz an agreeabel way and don't make himself offensiv by an overbearing, diktatorial manner. Hiz eezy, affabel stile iz such that wins frends at wunse and plases those around him in harmony with him.

Hiz sermon on Sunday morning waz all that kood be dezired. The attendanse waz good, meny besides our own members being prezent. Hiz theme waz *luv*, from the text, "little children luv wun another." From this text he gave a most excellent diskorse ov real and praktikal aplikashun to every day life. He showd us that luv iz the strongest and most happyfying element in the human organizashun and that it shoold be kultivated and followd in all the affares ov life. He deskribed the different kinds ov luv,

parental luv, filyal luv, brotherly luv, sexual luv, but the gratest ov all luv for our fellow-beings. He dwelt the longest upon this kind ov luv and made it kleeer that a luv of our rase—our brothers and sisters in humanity—shoold be more sakred with us, and be kultivated more largely, until it removed mere selfishness and personal agrandizement from human sosity. He showd us that the opposit ov the luv ov humanity, selfishness, iz the gratest bane ov human happines; that by following its instinkts and insentivs we ar konstantly trying to bild ourselves up at the expense ov those around us and that it leeds us to be gilty ov littel meenneses and injustis; kauzing us to take unfare advantages in thouzands ov ways ov those around us; and this korse makes us mersenary, grasping, avarishus, hartless, and kruel, and just to that extent villanous and unhappy. On the other hand he showd us that the dezire to make those happy around us, to perform kindly akts towards them, to ade them in the struggel ov life, to liten thare kares, to lessen thare trubbels, to help the poor and afflikted, to provide all with the meens urning an onest livelihood and in prokuring the nesarys and komforts essenshal to happiness iz the very way to be happy ourselvee. He sed emphatically, "there iz no way in which wekan so effektually sekure our own happines az by kontributing to the happines ov others." He sed kindnes begets kindnes, charity begets charity, and luv begets luv. Evry thing tends to beget its like. If, then, we wil karefully kultivate the good kwalitys ov our natures by striving to make those happy around us and by making ourselves az agreeabel az possibel, we wil suksseed in making this world ov ours a grate deel better and

plezanter; it wil not be the vale ov teers that it iz now, but wil be konverted into a vary paradise. He sed he had often thawt that the luv ov God waz the most important element in our natures, but that he had gradually changed hiz mind, and that he now kon-sidered luv for our fellow-beings the most important feeling we kan exersize. God iz so far abuv us that our luv iz not essenshal to him; he haz resourses ov hiz own and iz not dependent upon us, and that he iz really skarsely affekted by anything we kan do to him or in referense to him; but not so with our fellow-mortals! Evry akt we kommit haz a direkt effekt upon them and adds to thare happines or unhappines az the kase may be. He sed if we kood lern to konsider that we ar all responsibel for the kondishun ov thoez around us, we wood make more effort to improve it. "My frends," sed he, "Let us spend our lives in trying to make the world better and in inkreasing the grate sum ov happines and enjoyment which our fellow-beings ar justly entitled to.

It iz hardly wurth while for me to rite yu all he sed, but I ashure yu it waz a sensibel diskorse, and made me feel az tho I wanted to spend the balanse ov my life in doing all the good I kan by putting others in the way ov being happy, by removing thare littel greefs and anxietys, and helping them to get along in the world. And I am resolved to akt upon it and make it a praktikal thing. I kan feel that my luv for my fellow-beings haz ben inkreased sinse I herd that sermon. I liked it bekauz the relijun in it waz nacheral relijun, and referred altogether to this world. If we kan sukseed in making this world happy, it will be far better than spending our time tawking about anuther world. "Wun

wurld at a time," I hav seen uzed az a motto in yure paper, and I think it a very good wun; I think it wil be better for us to akt upon it insted ov streching our neks and straning our ize to se what iz going on in anuther world and in trying to find out wiat we kan do for eny being hoo inhabits it. We kan not improov the kondishun ov eny uther world than this, but our efforts kan hav a desided effekt upon the peepeel and the affares ov this world. I wish evrybody wood make it hiz study and labor to se how much he kan do to remoov its unhappiness and ad to its happines.

Wun feuture about the Elder's preeching, which suted me and others very well indeed, waz that he tawt offhand, and did not reed it from a paper. It seemd more harty and rite from the sourse ov tru inwardness. He iz not speshaliy elokwent, but he tawks wel and impresses hiz hearers that he meens what he sez, that he iz a man ov onest konvikshuns.

It iz needles for me to inform yu that the Elder's sermon gave very good satisfakshun; and it did not take long for the leeding members to get together and deside that Elder Sniggels wood anser for our shepherd and that we had better sekure him for a yeer.

Towards nite Deeken Kragehed came over to our house, and we had a regular Sunday biznes tawk with the Elder. We wanted to see what he wood preech for us a yeer. He sed he liked our peepeel and our lokality, and he had made up hiz mind that he wood labor with us twelve months for wun thouzand dollers. That figgerstruk us az being rather rezonabel, and we did not feel like beeting him down a grate deel. But we told him we had

berryd a grately esteemd pastor hoo fathefully servd us for nine hundred dollers a yeer, and that we did not feel az tho we wanted to go abuv that sum, and that if he thawt he kood kum and live with us a yeer for that amount that we wood giv it, and pay him regularly evry kwarter. He sat and lookd in the fire a few minits, and sed, "Brethren, I had rather work for nine hundred dollers a yeer and get it, when I hav ernd it, than to work for twelve hundred dollers and not get it. It has been my experiense that ernaling the muny iz wun thing, and getting it iz another. The last 3 plases where I workd dilijently muny iz stil du me, and which I probably shall never get. I don't like to dun for my muny after I hav ernd it; and az yu agree to pay me promptly evry kwarter I wil aksept yure offer and wil kum on az kwik az yu wish." We told him he kood kum this week if he choze. The widow Goodly haz moovd and the parsonage waz redder for him. So abowt Thursda we expekt the Elder, hiz wife, and 2 dawters wil kum on to make Zion Hil thare home til 1880 at leest. And if he wares az well az he promises we shal hav no grounds for komplaint.

I wil, Mr. Editur, detane yu no longer at this time. I hav sum important bizines to attend to and wil hurry over to the post-offis with this. I hope yu ar getting along wel and that yure approaching trials wil pas off litley and leev yu unscathed by yure enemys. Aksept assurances ov my kontinued esteem,

JOEL SKIDMORE,

1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XXIV.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

ZION HIL, N. J., Feb. 17, 1879.

MR. EDITUR: The reezon I did not rite yu last week waz bekauz our dawter Synthia and her husband Jiles Studwel from Filadelfy were out to make us a vizit ov a fu days, and tha took up our atten-shun so much that I really kood not find the necessary time to do myself justis in riting yu. When I sit down to rite a letter to THE TRUTH SEEKER I don't want to be bothered much for 2 or 3 ours. I want to keep my hed pretty kleer, and my mind kom-pozed, for yu se it iz going to be put in print, and be red by perhaps 10, or 20, or 30 thouzand peepele. So I feel as tho I waz put on my best behavuyr, and aut to hav a littel kare az to how I rite. Don't you no thare haz grone up in my feelings a real affek-shun for THE TRUTH SEEKER readers? I tel yu tha feel like old frends, and I beleev I should feel kwite unhappy to sever my konneckshun with them.

I hav been told by sum ov my Kristyan frends that I waz doing myself a grate injustis, and the kauz of Kriste grate harm by riting theze epistels, and I hav 2 or 3 letters which yu sent me, wharein some ov yure readers were dissatisfyd with my letters, and were not abel to see what I waz driving at. Wun man, yu remember, thawt I waz a gossiping old fool, and that I had better nct rite for publikashun until I lernd how to spel. Now, ov couse theze various opinyuns affekt me more or less, but not enuf to divert me from the line ov duty which I hav marked

out for myself. I felt that I had a purpus to karry out when I kommensed to rite you, and hoped to be abel to bring you to the lite ov the truth, az wel az to giv yure reeders sum informashun az to what iz going on at Zion Hil. If I hav not been fortunate enuf to akkomplish all I undertook, I feel shure I hav a part of it.

I begin to think I shal not be abel to konvert yu or to bring yu over to be a Baptist, but this much I kan say that by riting for yure paper I hav taken interest enuf in it to kauz me to reed it regularly and I hope to sum benefit to myself. Tru I hav several times ben almost shokd at what yu and yure kontributors hav had to say, but I nevertheles feel that my vews hav been broadend out so that I kood see further in sum direkshuns than formerly. If my TRUTH SEEKER reeding haz had the tendensy to lessen my fathe in sum things and in sum direkshuns it haz inkreed my fathe and konfidence in humanity and haz inspired me with renewd hope that the world will ultimately reech a hier plane ov thawt and akshun than ever heretofore okkupyd. So if I hav not dun THE TRUTH SEEKER eny good I kan feel that it haz dun me good and it iz wun ov the proudest akts ov my life to aknolej this to beleevers or unbeleevers. And let me sa rite heer that I hav progressd so far that I hav got to think that beleevers are just about az good az unbeleevers. When I think over the rekord ov erring klerjymen, deekens, and prominent members of the churches which yu hav resently lade before yure reeders and kompare them with such men az Kaptin Smith, a few more like him hoo I hav not sed much about, and I may, Mr. Editor, I think ad yureself, for I

kannot help thinking you are an onest man, whatever faults yu may hav, and onesty iz wun of the britest kwalitys that ever shone in the human karakter. I hav got so I plase it a good deel abuv fathe. Yes, an honest man is the noblest work ov God, and onesty, too, iz the noblest work of man. When men are lerning to be onest tha are engaged in the hiest labor they kan be employd in, and my opinyun iz tha had better make it a life biznes.

Exkuse me, I wil not filosofize or moralize much just now. I waz tawking about my letters to yure paper. I am sorry if I am boring yure reeders. I hoped to be abel to make myself interesting to sum ov them. Yu sent me sum letters that komplemented me hier than I dezerved, and it made me blush behind my eers when I red them over, and I don't know when I hav ben so much flattered before.

I want yu and yure reeders to remember that I hav never pretended to be anything more than a plane old kuntry deeken hoo trys to be onest towards hiz fellowmen and not to injur wun ov them noingly. I did not expekt to startel yure reeders with my grate lerning and hav never pretended to no vary much. Az to spelling, I hav never lade any klames to that dezirabel akkomplishment, but what I hav dun in that line haz ben with a vew ov trying to introduse a reform to sum littel extent by uzing letters akkording to thare sounds and not to uze eny unnesesary wuns. I am wel aware my efforts hav been vary imperfekt, but I am satisfyd a grate reform iz needed in this line. English orthogرافy iz simply redikulus and thare ar few things needing reform more than it. I no vary wel that we

kan never hav a perfekt system ov orthografy without an inkrees ov letters—a letter for evry sound—but to introduce them now wood be taking more ov a step than kan be taken at wunse, and I thawt I wood praktis in my writing trying to spel my words az neer az tha ar pronounsed az possibel, hoping that the propriety ov doing so mite be seen and appreshiated by others.

Az to the kauze ov Kriste I am not much afrade ov hurting that. If it iz susseptibel ov being hurt by my simpel letters I think it pretty eezily damajd. I hav often thawt, when I hav herd Kristyan's expressing feers that the kauze ov God and the kauze ov Kriste being injurd by this, that, and the other, that they had but little konfidence in the almighty strength ov thare God and thare Savior to think thare kauze kan possibly be injured by anything a man kan say or do. I think so much ov them that I shoold be ashamed ov them to feel kompeld to own that I waz afrade ov them or thare kauze being eezily damajd.

I waz saying that our dawter and our son-in-law hav been out to se us. We ware right glad to hav a vizit with them, and to se them looking so wel and feeling so happy. They hav a babe 5 months old, and I must say it iz a plezant littel fellow. By that yu wil understand that it's a boy, and don't yu beleev tha are going to kall him Joel Skidmore, after me? I must sa it made me feel proud to no that my illustrius name iz thus to be transmitted to the rizing generashun. I liked the babe before Synthia told me that, but I ges I was vane and selfish enuf to like it stil better afterwards. But I hope it wil be a far better man than hiz grandfather. I waz wondering

if he wood ever be deeken ov a Baptist church. I don't beleev he wil, for its father haz got no relijun, and its mother haz not got enuf to kill a musketer. In my opinyun relijun iz going to be a skarse artikel in the Studwel family. Syntha says Jiles don't go to church wunce a yeer, and when he duz go he iz shure to go to sleep before the sermon iz haf over. Synthia sez she don't go to church herself more than wunse in 3 months, and not to the same church twice a yeer. Sumtimes she goze to the Baptist, sumtimes to the Presbyterians, sumtimes to the Methodists, sumtimes to the Universalists, and sumtimes to the Kwakers, and she sez she kannot se much differense between them, only the Kwakers don't sing, but keep vary stil and kwiet. Konsidering the bringing up she had in a pius, relijus family, I feer she duz not do much oner to her parents, espeshally to her father, who iz first deeken in a vary relijus church. I sed to wife that I gesd it was her fault that Synthia iz not ov a more pius turn ov mind, for everybody nows that Deeken Skidmore haz relijun enuf for eny 3 persons in the kuntry. Yu aut to heer how Sally repulsed me, thus: "O, Joel Skidmore, how yu do tawk! What if yu are deeken? I hav twice az much relijun any da az yu hav. Mine iz inkreasing while yures iz growing les evry week. Yu reed that old TRUTH SEEKER a few months longer and I wouldn't giv 3 sents for all the relijun or morality yu wil hav left." "Why, Sally," sed I, "how yu rong me. If I shoold for eny kanz loze my theoloujikal beleef or eny share ov it, I hope I shal not loze my morality. Yu kannot sa I hav a partikal les morality now than I had 20 yeers ago, when yu kannot deny that I had relijun enuf for eny use in the

world. No, Sally, whatever changes ma take plase with me, I hope never to part with eny share ov my moral prinsiples. I ekspekt to be just az good a man for the remainder ov my life az I hav ben thus far. I don't ekspekt to lie, rob, steel, nor murder, and I don't beleev THE TRUTH SEEKER wil ever teeche me to do enything ov the kind. If yu wil wate for me to bekum a roge until that paper makes me wun yu wil hav to wate a long time." Thus yu se, my wife and I had a littel spat about yure paper. She don't like it worth a sent, but I do, and I don't think she or enybody else kan tawk me out ov it.

I must tel yu sumthing about our new preecher. Elder Sniggles is going on in a good sensibel way and iz giving, so far, pretty good satisfakshun. Hiz sermons ar short, mild, and praktikel. If tha lak enything it iz in not being orthodox enuf and doktrinal enuf to sute sum ov the more zelus members. I understand Sister Jones begins to kritisize him for not having life and power enuf, but I think the majority ov the kongregashun ar so far vary wel satisfyd with him. But between yu and me, Mr. Editur, I wil just predikt that it wil not be meny months before a spirit ov dissatisfakshun wil arize on the part ov the most influenshal members towards the Elder bekause ov hiz faleyure in not koming up to thare idea ov a true preecher. They want wun hoo wil denounce sin and sinners more vehemently and will make more efforts towards konverting the ungodly. There ar a dozen or more hoo wish to hold a revival in our church, but the Elder iz oppozed to it. He sez he does not beleev in wild revivals ard that he haz seldom seen much good kum ov them.

This pozishun ov hiz iz going to raze a breeze that may result in a hurrikane.

It looks now az tho we shoold not hav a revival in our church this winter, but I tel yu our Methodist frends in the Holler ar having a lively time ov it. Tha hav ben running now neerly 2 weeks, day and nite, and a part ov the time tha hav had 3 preechers blowing and striking with immense power. Kaptin Smith waz over here last nite, and he sed the Methodist preechers had ladeld out so much brimstone down thare in the Holler that it lookd farely blue for haf a mile around, and the smel ov sulfer iz so strong az to almost take wun's breth until he gets a little uzed to it. He sed tha had more hel to the skware aker in Pius Holler now than eny plase he waz ever in. The Kaptin invited me to go over with him sum afternoon and sta til we had got all the hel broth we wanted, or until our spirits wer satisfied. We hav agreed to go wun day sumtime this week, and, az we may see and hear sumthing that wil interest yure reeders, I ges I wil hav to write yu sum akkount ov what we see and heer. I wil not promis now whether I wil rite yu next week or not, but wil in 2 weeks anyway. I prezume if I rite yu wunse in 2 weeks it wil be az often az a good meny ov yure reeders wil kare to heer from me.

Suzan sez she wants to be remembered to the old editur. Yures seasingly, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XXV.

PIOUS HOLLOW REVIVAL.

ZION HIL, N. J., Mar. 10, 1879.

MR. EDITOR: Wel, Kaptin Smith and I went over to Pius Holler to attend thare revival meeting, as I rote yu we shoold in my last. We got thare Friday afternoon about 2 o'clock, and found them in the midst ov a very lively time. A preecher by the name ov Blowhard, or sum such name, waz speaking in a very loud vois to a ful kongregation ov ankshus looking peeple, hoo seemd to drink in evry wurd he sed. Hiz subjekt waz the terribel kondishun ov the damd, thoze hoo ar lost and without hope. He got very much eksited; he grew red in the fase, and farely frothed at the mouth as tho he mite be going mad. He pounded the pulpit and the big Bible like tha had given him sum dire offense, and he waz determined to get satisfakhshun out ov them.

O, how ankshus he seemd to perswade the peepel to beleev what he sed about the unkwenchabel anger ov God, and to fle from the rath to kum az tha wood from a hurrikane or any other kalamity. He sed enything waz eezier to endure than the anger ov the Lord. It waz more terribel than a simoon, a tornado, or the severest thunder storm that ever waz nown. Nothing, he sed, kan stand before the anger ov God. He sed, too, that the anger of God waz kontinuous and never seessed. He never iz rekonsiled to sin, and wil never yeeld the kontest with it. God

iz angry with the wiked evry day, and he wil never giv up hiz anger until the wiked repent and turn from thare evil ways. He insisted that tho God waz kalld a God ov luv, he was just az much a God ov anger az ov luv, and anger iz just az much a part ov hiz nachure az lav iz. It iz just az nacheral for him to hate evil as to luv good, and to be angry at wiked men and wimmen az to luv good wuns. And hiz anger iz just az enduring az hiz luv. Evil men, evil ways, and evil generally, he wil hate to all eternity just az strongly and az unseesingly az he wil luv and cherish the good; and az thare ar so meny more wiked men and wimmen than good, he rekwires more hatred than luv to fil the mezure ov eech sole, and to mete out to eech wun what tha deserve. He repeated the remark several times over that God waz more anger than luv; yes, three to wun, if not ten to wun, az thare waz at leest that differense in the proporshun between thoze lost and thoze saved.

When he kum to make hiz appeals to the sinners to turn, he grew extremely elokwent and razed hiz vois to a very hi pitch. He sed, "Oh, dying sinners, thare iz a grate deel more ov damnashun in existense than salvashun; a grate deel more ov mizery than happines; a grate deel more ov hate than luv; a grate deel more ov teers and grones than smiles; a grate deel more ov hel than heven, and it stands yu all in hand to sekure yure own heven and to shun hel for yureselvs. If yu don't turn from yure evil ways and turn to God for yureselvs, yu never wil find him; if yu seek not heven for yureselvs, yu never wil find it; and yu kan only find it threw agony and teers. Think not that yu

ar going to heven on downy beds ov eeze, or by attending church wunse in awhile and paying yure assessments ov \$50 a yeer to pay the preecher, keep the church in repare, and all that; yu may perform all the good works in the katalog, and, I may almost say, yu may keep all the kommands ov the dekalog, if yu do not kry out to God for forgiveness and induse him to turn hiz anger away from yu and let hiz peese and blessing desend upon yu, yu must hopelessly rest under hiz displezure and his feerse rath.

"It iz fatal to delay this most important bizness. If the anger ov the Lord iz not turnd away while in this life it never wil be dun to the latest moments ov eternity. If yu di in yure sins, if yu di without having obtaned the forgivnes ov God, unles hiz rath iz turnd to lov while yu are stil on the shores ov time, it never, never, never wil be dun. If yu di a child ov hel and damnashun, to hel and damnashun yu wil go, and thare yu wil remane so long az thare iz a God, a heven, and a hel in existense. And what iz more, the longer yu neglekt the offers ov salvashun; the longer yu defer yure restorashun to God's luv, the longer yu put off the grate da ov rekonsilashun the harder it iz to effekt it. If yu make not the effort to avert God's angry fase from yu the more implakabel it bekums.

"If God sees that yu are indifferent az to whether he luvs or hates yu, hiz anger inkreeses and intensifys with every day that passes over yure hed, and the harder it bekomes to avert hiz anger from yu. It iz a thouzand times harder for him to forgiv an old sinner 60 or 70 yeers ov aje than a child or yuth from 12 to 20. In the erly yeers ov our life the

anger ov God iz mild and iz grately temperd by hiz kindnes and luv, and iz then eezily chanjed into luv and kompashun, but az yeer after yeer rolls away and peese iz not made with God, the porshun ov luv which waz felt for the child and yuth bekums hatred and venjense in manhood and old aje. And dying in this kondishun iz awful indeed. Yu bekum farther and farther removd from the possibility ov obtaning God's forgivnes; in fakt yu soon arrive at that kondishun whare God's forgivnes iz utterly impossibel, whare hiz anger and hiz eternal hatred iz yure everlasting porshun; and yu go on inheriting more and more the rath ov God so long az eternity endures and God iz God.

"He kannot chanje hiz nature. Thoze on hoom he turns hiz fase ov kompashun, those hoom he luvs, he luvs more and more fervently so long az eternity endures. He luvs with inkressing luv az aje sukseeds aje forever; and the same it iz with hiz rath; it inkreeses in intensity and grows hotter and more persistent away down to the latest ours marked on the klok ov eternity. And, he hates yu harder and harder with inkressing vehemense and bitterness az the ajes roll by. He hates yu bekauz yu did not seek hiz mersy in time. He hates yu for yure indifference, he hates yu bekauz yu died without sekuring hiz forgivnes; he hates and detests yu bekauz yu hav bekum a hopeles child ov deth and bekauz yu never kan reseev wun ray ov hope from the everlasting father ov all men. He hates yu for being damd. He hates yu for plasing yureself in the kondishun whare he kannot bestow hiz kompashun upon yu. He hates yu more and more, inkressing

from aje to aje in geometrical progresshun so long az he sits upon the throne ov Izrael.

"Then, my friends, hoo wood not rather hav the luv ov God than hiz hatred? What sinner iz there in the sound ov my voise that wil not make interseshun that this our God may turn hiz anger from yu? Hoo that wil not, before yu retire to yure bed this nite, kry to the God ov luv and kom-pashun before it iz too late that luv and goodnes may be extended to yu before it iz too late. O my frends, let me intreet yu before it iz everlastingly too late to make interseshun to heven; kry in yure inner soles to the God ov heven that hiz rath may be turnd from yu and that yu may be numberd with those who enjoy hiz mersy and luv. It iz eezy for yu to be saved now, if yu wil. This iz yure day ov grase; this iz yure day ov salvashun. If yu do not seek the forgivnes ov God this nite, if yu do not obtain it this week, it may be too late, too late, forever and forever. Heven and happines iz now within yure reech; but if yu refuze them, if yu wil not aksept them when tha are held out to yu, yu wil shurely go to the rejuns ov the damd, where yu wil weep, and wale, and howl in anguish and pane threw a never-ending eternity.

"Kum, my frends; kum now while yu kan; kum while I intreet with yu; kum this our; kum this very moment. Yu hav no ashuranse ov another day or another our being held out to yu for repentense. Probably if yu do not aksept the luv ov God now, yu never kan hav it. It iz just az eezy to bekum a child ov God's luv az it iz for yu to turn yure hand over, if yu kan only find it in yure hart to do

so. Then heer my last kall and kum forward and ask God's forgivnes. He wil heer yu now, but next week, and even to-morrow, it may be too late."

And so the man went on. The longer he tawked, the louder he tawked and the hoarser he grew until it bekame paneful to heer him. He implored sinners to kum forward to the altar and lay hold ov the horns ov salvashun. Hiz sermon waz a powerful wun and did take sum effekt. Wun bakslider, hoo twice before haz belonged to the church and waz turned out for bad kondukt, returned; wun old woman and 2 yung girls went forward to the mourner's bench to reseev the prares ov the saints that tha mite be saved. But the preecher kept on for haf an our longer to see if he kood not get uthers to kum forward; and at last hiz efforts bekame the merest ravings, and the man waz kompeld, from the mere exhaustshun, to sit down. He lookd az tho he had ben fiting fire and the fire had got the best ov it. I kood not help feeling sorry for the man, and wishd that hiz grate effort kood hav ben attended with more sukses.

After this sermon waz over an urnest prare waz offerd up for mersy by wun ov the ministers, and 2 or 3 songs or hims wer sung, and the mourners wer tawkd to by a presiding elder, and then, after another short prare, the andiense waz dismissed for supper and wer enjoined to return in an our and a haf for the evening meeting, when it waz hoped the blessings of heven wood be showerd upon us all.

Kapitin Smith and I went to a frend ov hiz and got our supper, and we tawkt over what we had herd. The Kapitin konkluded it wood be pretty hard for him to luv such a God az Brother Blowhard

had piktured to us, and so far az he waz konserned, he waz afrade he wood hav to take the chansen ov eternal fire before he kood aksept the kondishuns that had been held out to us. He sed he shoold feel under obligashuns to follow out hiz own best jujment and reezen, and if that took him to hel, why to hel he wood hav to go. And if he did hav to go he wood try to go like a man ov independent mind. But he sed he kood not beleev any such ravings az we had herd. It waz all the effekts ov a dezeezed imajunashun and inkorrekt edukashun. He waz haf inkliind to think the preecher beleevd a part ov what he sed, but an effort to work upon the feers and ignoranse ov hiz beleevvers waz vary apparent.

In the evening meeting we had a very loving sermon from Mr. Lovewell. He took the luv side of the argument, and showd how grate the luv of Jezus iz for the hull human rase; that he so luvd the world that he freely gave up hiz life that men mite be saved. He went threw the paneful deth ov the kross that he mite beg from hiz Father the possibility ov the hull human rase bekuming happy. But that Jezus stood now bekoning and kalling evry sole to kum to him; that hiz bleeding hands and feet were exhibited to full vew, and tho he may be willing to di a thouzand more deths to save the children ov men, stil evry sole haz a work to do for himself, and he kannot possibly do it all. And tho he now stands on Mount Kalvary and extends his bleeding hands to heaven and implores hiz Father to forgiv the weak and frale and ignorant sons and dawters ov men hoo no not what tha do, it iz still needful for evry wun to make an exershun for themselves.

If soles wil not kry to God for themselves, if tha wil not beleev in the son ov God, and that he haz power to save the world from hel, tho Jezus may open anew the woond that waz made in hiz side, tho he may agane and agane pass threw the angwish ov sole that he felt in the garden ov Gethsemane and that he felt on the kross, that all wood do no good unless each sole made a strugger for itself and made sum effort to win the favor ov heven. We must all do az much az lift our hands and make a sine that we wish God to forgive us.

Sed he, "just open yure harts and let Jezus, the king ov heven in. He iz wating now for yu to aksept him and hiz terms ov everlasting life. Embrace this opportunity or yu may never hav another. If yu wood spend a happy eternity with Jezus, kum now; but if you wood go to hel and share the horrors ov the damd soles hoo must be in the kompany ov devils and demons forever and ever, kontinue to spurn the kind offers now held out to yu."

He kontinued in this strain for an our, then thare waz more singing and praing; more pleading to kum to Jezus; more going around among the audience to perswade them to go forward; more exsitement, more wildness, and more kraziness. Some 7, old and yung, went forward, neeld in front, and wer prayd for. Sum ov theze had ben forward before; and 2 or 3 ov them, I think, wil need to go agane to make them just what tha shoold be. Wun ov them I no to be an old sinner, and 2 ov the wimen are sed to be very loose, but I wish them wel.

At 10 o'clock Kaptin Smith and I thawt it waz time for us to go home, and we left them shouting, hollering, and akting like insane peepel more than

sensibel human beings, and we wer not remarkably favorably impressd with revivals. I am not sorry that our Elder iz not in favor ov a revival in our church.

I must not take yure time now to tel you Kaptin Smith's remarks on what we had herd, but they were to the point and kontaned good sense. The Kaptin iz alwayze sensibel in what he haz to say. I learn that 7 persons hav joind the church in Pius Holler, old and yung, and that 3 hav gone entirely krazy. It duz not pay.

But I wil kloze now. I wish yu safely threw yure trial and hope yu wil beet Komstok. If yu hav to go to prizen I ges I had better send in no more letters til yu are home again, az I don't no eny body there but yurself, and I only no yu, az I reed yure ritings.

I inclose \$1.50. Pleeze send me "Greg's Creed ov Kristendom." I want to reed it.

Sincerely yures, JOEL SKIDMORE,
1st Deeken ov Zion Hil Baptist Church.

LETTER NO. XXVI.

A CONVERSION.

ZION HIL, N. J., April 28, 1879.

MR. EDITUR: I hav now withheld riting to yu for 6 weeks, and for 2 reezens. *First*. Yu hav been much taken up with yure wun-sided trial, publishing and so forth. I new, under the surkumstances, that yure reeders wood not kare much about heering from Deeken Skidmore when thare editur waz in such deep trubble. *Second*. My mind haz been deeply okkupied, and I hav ben experiensing a grate chanj ov hart. I begun to reed yure paper konsiderably les than a yeer ago with the idea that by yure giving me a sutabel plase in yure kolums I kood konvert yu to the Kristian fathe in a short time. But it haz ben rite the other wa. Yure paper and yure books hav konverted me. I am kwite another man so far az beleef iz konsurnd. I by no meens regret the chanj, for I am feeling az happy or happier than ever before. But my good, pius wife regrets it, and she blames yu for it all. She wishes in her hart that I had never seen a TRUTH SEEKER. I ask her if I am eny wurse man than before; if I do not provide az wel for the family and treet evrybody az sivilly az ever I did? She sez, "O, yes; yu are the same Joel Skidmore that yu always hav ben, but yure not Deeken Skidmore any more, and yu do not stand so hi with thoze that no us; I meen church peepel. It iz not, Joel, that I am afrade that yu are going to hel

bekauz yure beleef haz chanjd, but it makes such a difference in our standing among fokes, and in our respektability. I tel yu, Joel, there iz nothing like respektability in this wurd. If yu hav not got that, yu mite just az wel be ded. Now when I go to church I hav almost to hang my hed in shame when my eyes meet Mrs. Jones' and sum uthers, bekauz yu hav rezind being deeken and hav gone over to be a Bennett Infidel! Oh, yu don't no, Joel, what greef it haz kauzd yure hart-broken wife."

"Oh, my deer Sally," sed I, "do not take this matter so much to hart. There iz no disgrase attached to it all. I respekt myself for being an onest man, and I feel sure I will kontinue to hav the respekt ov thozе hooz respekt iz wurth having. Thozе hoo cannot respekt me for being an onest man are themselves defishent in good sense, and I kare but littel for thare opinyuns. I hope for the respekt and esteem ov all onest, uprite peepel, but kare littel for bigots or hypokrits. At all events, Sally, let us retane our own respekt, whether we hav Mrs. Jones' or not."

I think, Mr. Editur, I aut to tell yu sumthing how this chanj haz kum over me. In the first plase, I must konfes that THE TRUTH SEEKER haz gradually opend my eyes to be abel to see things differently from what I uzed to, and I found I waz loozing fathe in meny things I uzed to regard az very sakred. Tawking with Kaptin Smith from time to time haz helpd very much in the same direktshun. He haz kleeer konseptshuns and a well-informed mind. I hav lerned a good deel from him. But the 3 or 4 books I hav red finishd the biznes and noked the Baptist relijun entirely out ov me.

Yu wil remember that in a former letter I orderd a kopy ov "Greg's Creed ov Kristendom" which yu publish. Wel, it's a grate book. I red it over vary karefully and its mild, argumentativ, kandid reezoning thurly upset my fathe in the supernatural karakter ov the Kristyan relijun. I red it over the sekond time. I red much ov it aloud to Sally and Suzan. Suzan liked it very much and kleeerly komprehended the force ov it and she iz fully established in a disbeleef in Kristyan dogmas. Sally admitted that the writer iz reezonable and korrekt, but she disliked him bekauz he waz leeding her husband away from the church.

When I had red the book the sekond time over I made up my mind that the days ov my deekenship were neerly over and I took the book to Elder Sniggles and asked him if he wood like to reed it. He sed he had herd ov it many times and he wood be glad to reed it. Kaptin Smith, when he found I was reeding Greg told me when I had finished with that he had a few books he wood lend me. I told him as I had got in a reeding way, I wood like to keep on until I had bekum konvinsed what iz rite and what iz rong. He akkordingly let me take "Paine's Aje ov Reezon," "Volney's Ruins," and the kopy ov "Amberley's Analysis ov Reljuz Beleef," which he bawt ov yu in the winter. I red them in the order I hav given them and I waz gratefully interested in them. Tha kompletely finishd the work which Greg's Creed had so ably kommensed. Paine is perfectly unanswerable, Volney iz beautiful and konvinsing, and Amberley goes over the entire ground ov the old relijuns ov the world in such a full and masterly manner that it iz impossible

for wun to retane any fathe in reveeld or supernaturnal relijun. I am now just az much an unbeliever as I formerly waz beleever. I kan se that I hav been rong all my life and I am more than glad to so fully kum to the nolej ov the truth. It iz very welkum to me and I kannot prize it too highly. It haz been a struggel for me to throw aside the fathe which I hav all my life huggd to my boozum az the only meens of salvashun and sever the konnektshun which for so many yeers I hav maintained with the brethren and sisters ov the church. It iz by no meenz an ezy matter for a person to lay aside the fathe ov a life time and adopt a new sort of a beleef. The lessons implanted in our minds when we are children and yuth are slowest to depart from us; the impreshuns thus made in the early part ov our lives are the hardest to be removed. It makes me think of pulling eye-teeth to root out ov the mind the relijus lessons I lerned in the katekism and at Sunday-skool. The fathe planted in my mind by the sermons I herd when I waz a yung man seemd to stik to me like my own name or like my features and personal karakteristiks. But the books I hav named hav pretty effektually done the work. I hav been in a life and death struggle for many weeks and I hav kum out the better for it. I hav thrown aside a larj amount ov rubbish and hav taken on a kargo ov truth and reezon. I hav made a grate exchanj and I am vastly the better for it. I woud not go back to the old creed and dogmas for another farm just like my own. It haz ben hard to brake the old church konnektshun; to tell the brethren and sisters that I kood no longer travel the same rode with them, and to witnes the sorrow and grief de-

pikted upon thare kountenanses, but the ordeel had to be passd thro and now it iz over and I am feeling az sreen az a butifol sunrize in May. I do not begruj the effort I hav made or the konflikt I hav passd throo.

A week after I let the Elder take the Kred ov Kristendom to reed, I kalld upon him again to se what he thawt ov the little work. I found him in a studious frame ov mind. He informd me he had red it very karefully, and he must konfess that he was unable to refute its teachings or evade its reezonabul konklushuns. The Elder took me by the hand and lookd me steddily in the eyes, and said, "Deeken Skidmore, Mr. Greg iz right. The Kristyan relijun iz not what we hav thawt it to be. It iz not ov supernatural orijin; it waz not reveeld from heven. It iz meerly an outgrowth ov other systems which existed before it, and which systems were ov human orijin. The Kristyan churches are in grate error in this thing. Thouzands think our relijun iz hully divine, and that it iz the only divine system in existense. I feel shure it iz no more divine than the other systems, and I feer no more tru. There iz sum truth in all the systems, and a grate deel that iz erroneous and mistaken."

"Elder Sniggles," said I, "yu are an onest man to make this statement to me, and I oner yu for it. I hav regarded yu az a kandid, truthful man, but waz hardly prepared to heer yu make such a statement, and I am so fully konvinced that it iz az yu say that I hav kum to the konklushun to sever my konnektshun with the church, and to no longer pretend to beleev that which iz impossible for me to beleev, and I hav resolvd to not defer this matter. On next

Sunday morning, just before the dismissal ov the kongregashun, I wish to say a few words explanatory ov the state ov my mind, to tel my friends that I am no longer a beleever in the doktrines ov the church, and that I feel it my duty to withdraw myself from it, and to sever my konnekshun with them."

The Elder's fase wore a sad expreshun. Sed he, "I dislike to hav you leev the church. It makes me feel like leeving myself, but I kannot. Deeken Skidmore, I oner yu for the kourse yu are about to take, and I only wish I waz in a kondishun to go with yu, but, alas! I am not; I hav never lerned to do anything but preech, and don't no how to pursu any other avokashun for a livelihood. There iz no other way for me to take kare ov my wife and family but just to keep on preeching a set ov fables that I in no wise beleev. But Deeken don't say anything about this, I beg ov yu. It must not be nown how much ov a heretik I am. I shall ov kourse, keep on preeching as long as I am able to tawk, but I shall take good kare to preech as little ov what we kon-sider to be nonsense az possibel. I kan tawk to my heerers about the duties ov life, and ov our kondukt towards one another. There wil be no harm in that kind ov preeching, and I shall not feel az tho I waz playing the hipokrit so badly az if I waz tawking about the mirakulous merits of Jesus' blood.. Deeken Skidmore, I am very sorry to hav yu leev the church for another reezon: you hav been my main stay, besides being the cheef pillar ov the kongregashun; yu hav been the meens ov my getting my salary promptly, and to yu the hull church has looked to se that the finanshial part ov the konsern was kept up. What I am to do, and what the church iz to do I

kannot tel. I feer we shal all go to the dogs without yu to gide us along throo the shoals and brake-waters."

"Ah, Elder, yu must not feel diskourajd. There are many aktiv members left hoo will dubble thare exershuns in behaf ov the good kauz. Sum ov the yung men hoo are koming on must step in the trases and lern how to hawl the load along."

I left the Elder feeling very much downharted and diskonsolate, with the request, however, that he wood say nothing about my kase to anybody until after Sunday. I met him wunse after that, and he lookd az tho he had lost hiz grandmother. When Sunday kame we had a vary solum surmon from the Elder on the mutability ov sublunary affares, and he tried to impress us with the folly ov plasing our harts upon the things ov this wurd. After a solum prare and hym, he told the audiense that I had a few wurds to say whieh wood fil thare harts with sorrow. I rose, and in a firm voise sed: "My friends, I hav ben konnekted with yu many years, and for a grater part ov the time we hav got along plezantly together, but now the time haz kum when we must part. I am not going to moov from Zion Hil, but az I kan no longer beleev az I hav dun upon religjus matters, and I now feel it to be my duty to tel yu that an entire chanj has kum over my mind, and to rezine my membership in yure church and the pozishun that yu hav kindly given me. I thank yu all for yure kindness to me and for the frendship I hav reseevd from yu. I shal okkashunly attend meeting with yu, but yu wil from this our no longer konsider me wun ov yure number."

If a thunder-klap had struk the church and naked

down the steepel grater konsternashun wood not hav taken pozheshun ov that kongregashun. Sum groand aloud, and on several cheeks the teers wer seen silently koursing down. Elder Sniggles sed this waz an unwelkum blow to all, and az unlookd for az unwelkum. He hoped all wood bare it with fortitude and dubble thare diligense in wel-doing. In dismissing us he kawshund us to hav littel to say about what had taken plase.

A feeling ov gloom haz spred over this kommu-nity, and several hav told me and sent word to me that tha kood not feel worse had any member ov thare family ben snatched away by the hand ov deth; and 4 or 5 hav sed that Zion Hil Baptist church haz reseevd its deth blow, but I think that estimate iz extravagant. It wil get along sum how.

Kaptin Smith iz the happiest man I ever saw. He sez nothing haz okkurd sinse Lee surrenderd to Grant that made him so happy az my getting my eyes open to the truth and having kurrij enuff to leev the church. He sez he wood not take one thouzand dollers and hav it all changd bak again. He sez now we must get up a Liberal League in Zion Hil, and he wants I shoob be president, and sez we wil send in for a charter. I told him I wood be like klay in the hands ov the pott'n, so I suppose we wil soon be organizing.

I must tel yu that Liberalism iz growing fast out here. My leeving the church has given it a start. The six hoo took THE TRUTH SEEKER on trial hav desided to be permanent subscribers, and three more want me to send in their names. You wil find them inklozed, also money for the same. Pleez send me

"Supernatural Relijun" as soon as yu hav it redy. I intend to reed all the books yu publish.

Suzan sends her kindest regards to yu and sez she is go^g to make up a purse ov ten dollers to help towards your defense. I hav promised her three towards it, and Kaptin Smith haz promised three more. Sam Kragehed wil giv two. I must tel yu that Suzan haz got Sam neerly konverted over to Liberalism. She told him three months ago that she did not want to marry a church man, and she haz tawked to him till his faith in theology is very much shaken. She sez I may tel you in konfidense that on the 15th of June she and Sam are to be married, and if yu are not in prisen she invites yu to kum out and attend the wedding. We all want yu to kum and deliver a lekture. If yu do yu must stop at our house.

Now, deer frend, I hav detaned yu and yure reed-ers a long time. I beg yure pardon. I think I had better rite no more letters for publikashun for the present, or until I feel more at home in my new beleef. I may rite more after awhile. My thanks to yu and all yure reeders. I hope yu may get free from yure trubbels, and overkum all yure enemies. May yure life be long and happy.

Sincerely yure frend, JOEL SKIDMORE,
Late deeken of Zion Hil Baptist Church.

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